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**The GCC Joint Regional Security Effort: Utopia or Possibility?**

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# **The GCC Joint Regional Security Effort: Utopia or Possibility?**

**by**

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**Thesis**

Presented to the Faculty of the Graduate School of

The University of Texas at Austin

in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements

for the Degree of

**Master of Arts**

**The University of Texas at Austin**

**May 2018**

## **Abstract**

### **The GCC Joint Regional Security Effort: Utopia or Possibility?**

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The University of Texas at Austin, 2018

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Today, the Gulf Cooperation Council (the GCC) is often praised to be the most successfully integrated economic/political union after the European Union. A considerable number of scholars devoted their works to this union. However, a large part of the analysis overlooks or does not pay enough attention to the fact that historically the GCC's main purpose was not economic integration but maintaining regional security by means of a joint effort. Since its establishment in the year 1981 the GCC has faced several issues those became "litmus tests" for these efforts' success.

Before studying these issues closely, the thesis quickly analyzes the background of the union, examining the threats which brought it into being and the first patterns of maintaining regional security. Further on, it discusses the main conflicts and contradictions within the GCC, including the recent Qatari conflict. It continues by analyzing the condition of each country's army (arms, doctrine, and competency) and evaluating the success of the GCC's joint effort in Yemen.

In this thesis, I argue that that due to the contradictions between the states, lack of flexibility in the mechanisms of coordination and relatively low effectiveness of very expensive armies, the purpose of maintaining regional security solely by means of the GCC has not been reached yet.

## Table of Contents

List of Tables .....	vii
List of Figures .....	viii
List of Illustrations .....	ix
Introduction.....	1
Chapter 1: The GCC as a Regional Security Guarantor: Appearance and Development of the Idea.....	6
Doctrine, structure, and development of the Peninsula Shield Force (PSF) before the Gulf War .....	8
The Post-War Development of the PSF .....	11
The GCC Divided: Main Contradictions and Qatari Crisis.....	13
Qatari Crisis and the Reasons behind It .....	18
Crisis and its Aftermath .....	22
Chapter 2: Military Characteristics of the GCC states (2011 until now).....	31
Bahrain .....	31
Kuwait .....	32
Oman.....	33
Qatar .....	35
The UAE .....	36
Saudi Arabia .....	39
Chapter 3: Saudi Coalition Intervention into the Civil War of Yemen .....	46
Operation Decisive Storm .....	46
Operation Restoring Hope: Aims and Results .....	50
Price of the Operation .....	55

Conclusion .....	61
Appendix.....	63
References .....	71

## **List of Tables**

Table 1.1:	The Gulf Cooperation Council's Peninsular Shield Force. -----	10
Table 2.1:	Military Expenditure of the GCC, (2011-2018), \$bn. -----	42
Table 2.2:	Military Expenditure to GDP Ratio for the GCC countries (2011-2017). -----	43
Table 3.1:	Arms Imports of the GCC (ordered/delivered): 2011-2017. r-----	63

## **List of Figures**

Figure 1.1: The Gulf Cooperation Council's Peninsular Shield Force. -----	11
Figure 2.1: GCC countries by GDP (2016) -----	16
Figure 3.1: The Structure of Qatar Food Imports by Region (2015).-----	28
Figure 4.1: Military Expenditure of the GCC, graph (2011-2017).-----	44
Figure 4.2: Military Expenditure of the GCC (2011-2017), excluding Saudi Arabia.-----	45



## **List of Illustrations**

Illustration 1.1: Zones of Military Control, Yemen, 2015 and 2017. -----	51
Illustration 2.1: Maximum Houthi Expansion (2012-2015). -----	53
Illustration 3.1: Famine in Yemen, 2017. -----	57
Illustration 4.1: Al-Qaeda Presence in Yemen, 2017. -----	58

## **Introduction**

September 1, 2017, amid the developing Qatari crisis, Qatari Minister of Foreign Affairs claimed that the boycott against Qatar initiated by the other GCC members puts the whole Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) at risk. He claimed that the countries conducting this boycott “have put the Gulf Cooperation Council at risk by violating its basic principles, and directly resorting to attacking a nation member, instead of opting for conflict resolution measures.”<sup>1</sup> He also emphasized, that Qatar trusted the GCC as an organization, but there was no certainty if this trust would remain in the future. After over 35 years of its existence, the Council has come to the arguably most risky and uncertain point of its existence.

What would the fall and failure of the GCC mean to the world? The second, probably raising uncertainty and volatility of the oil markets. Also, the stronghold of the US influence in the Middle East would become instable, leading to further instability in the region. Even now, when the crisis outcome remains unclear, Iran is already trying to leverage the situation to its benefit, and it would definitely maintain this strategy in the case of any further escalation. If the GCC falls apart, the consequences will be serious and hard to predict, as today the GCC remains an important player on the international arena, and in regional affairs its importance is hard to overestimate. This influence touches upon every single sphere: economic, political, cultural, and social. Due to that, the recent crisis has become an important topic for the entire world. This thesis will discuss performance of the GCC in the security sphere (in this work we will look upon it in the context of military performance and cooperation) which is definitely among the most crucial ones in today's world.

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<sup>1</sup> “Qatar accuses the boycotting countries of putting the Gulf Cooperation Council at risk,” Middle East Monitor, September 1, 2017

As the young political/economic union unity was developing and its importance was growing, it attracted the attention of scholars and analytics. In the year 1986 Emile A. Nakleh published his monograph, *The Gulf Cooperation Council: Policies, Problems, and Prospects*, discussing the first initiatives of the Council and analyzing the potential future of the entity.<sup>2</sup> Since then, multiple monographs, papers and articles have appeared, each analyzing a different aspect of the GCC existence. The opinions about the unity's potential success varied. A large part of the research was devoted to processes of economic integration. In the year 2012 Maxim Subh emphasized that all the development was happening in the background of very serious inner contradictions which could present a threat to the GCC's future.<sup>3</sup> However, Galina Kosjunina and Nikolay Lomakin in 2014 did not see these contradictions as a serious threat.<sup>4</sup>

Some of the works concentrate on political and economic development – for instance, after the Arab Spring, Christopher Michael Davidson analyzes the history of the GCC and disputes between the states and within each of them in *After the Sheikhs: The Coming Collapse of the Gulf Monarchies*.<sup>5</sup> He comes to a conclusion, that “internal pressures and weaknesses are nonetheless already manifest, or soon to be so, in all of the Gulf Monarchies.” He also points out the importance of external pressures and claims that the future of the GCC states seems bleak. On the contrary, Russian scholars Elena Melkumyan and Grigory Kosach in their article *The Gulf Cooperation Council as regional*

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<sup>2</sup> Emile A. Nakhel *The Gulf Cooperation Council: policies, problems, and prospects* (New York: Praeger, 1986)

<sup>3</sup> Subh, Maxim. “ССАГПЗ: интеграция на фоне серьезных внутренних противоречий” [GCC: Integration Against the Background of Serious Internal Contradictions]. Институт Ближнего Востока [Institute of the Middle Eastern Studies], June 14, 2012. <http://www.iimes.ru/?p=14935>

<sup>4</sup> Galina Kostjinina and Nikolai Lomakin, «Эволюция экономической интеграции в рамках ССАГПЗ,» [Evolution of Economic Integration inside the GCC framework], Russian Herald of Foreign Economy, 2014, no 6., 101

<sup>5</sup> Christopher M. Davidson, *After the Sheikhs: The Coming Collapse of the Gulf Monarchies* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), 295

*military and political organization* conclude the GCC seems capable of modernizing the Council after the Arab Spring and avoiding further regional crisis.<sup>6</sup> This opinion is shared by Bandar Salman Mohammed Al-Saud, who analyses GCC security cooperation from the standpoint of jurisprudence and finds considerable success in the security sphere of development.<sup>7</sup>

The contradictions inside the GCC have already become a leitmotif in scholar discussion regarding any dimension of the Council's existence. The military cooperation sphere, which has arguably been the most important one for the GCC since the very beginning, does not represent any exception. For instance, both Faisal Mohammed Alsiri and Glenn P. Kuffel Jr. mention this problem in their works and connect it to the issue of ineffective chain of command in the Peninsula Shield Force (joint military force of the GCC).<sup>8</sup> The same conclusion is made by Elena Melkumyan and Grigory Kosach, who acknowledge the "differences" between the states as a significant factor which slows down progress in the sphere of security. On the other hand, Dr. Al-Rawashdeh Mohammad Salim did not mention the conflict of interests as one of the main threats to the GCC, concentrating more on the external threats, such as Iran.<sup>9</sup>

All of these works do a valuable job developing the topic of the GCC's role in regional security and its capability of maintaining it, but each of them misses several important aspects out. For instance, Faisal Mohammed Alsiri and Glenn P. Kuffel Jr.

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<sup>6</sup> Melkumyan, Elena and Kosach, Grigory, "[Совет Сотрудничества Арабских Государств Залива как региональная военно-политическая организация]", "The Gulf Cooperation Council as regional military and political organization," *The University of Moscow Herald* 25, no. 4 (2012)

<sup>7</sup> Bandar Salman Mohammed Al-Saud. *The GCC Security Convention: A Legal And Practical Analysis*, PhD diss. University of Glasgow, 1997

<sup>8</sup> Glenn P. Kuffel, *The Gulf Cooperation Council's Peninsular Shield Force*, (Report, Naval War College, 2000)

<sup>9</sup> Al-Rawashdeh Mohammad Salim, "Gulf Cooperation Council States (GCC), Military Power, between Temporary Alliances and Permanent Joint Mechanisms," *International Journal of Humanities and Social Science Invention*, August, 2015-4, no 8. [http://www.ijhssi.org/papers/v4\(8\)/Version-2/I0482071088.pdf](http://www.ijhssi.org/papers/v4(8)/Version-2/I0482071088.pdf)

devote their works almost exclusively to the PSF, even though this institution has never been the main instrument in reaching regional security. Al-Rawashdeh Mohammad Salim provides a good analysis of external threats but does not devote much attention to internal ones. He published the article in 2014, but now, after the outbreak of the Qatari crisis, we can understand the real importance of this missed factor. The article by Melkumyan and Kosach seems the most balanced one among these, but since it was written in 2012, the authors devoted a great deal of attention to the documents and statements of the GCC officials. Later developments in the region showed that some of the described projects were effective and operational only “on paper.”

For this reason, I decided to create a work which would analyze the GCC’s capability of protecting regional security, and in which I would try to find a balance between practical and theoretical aspects of the issue, with emphasis on the practical. The main purpose of theoretical analysis in this thesis is to understand the aims of the GCC in the security sphere – and practical analysis will determine their capability of reaching these aims.

Chapter 1 describes the idea of the GCC as regional security guarantor, analyzes its appearance and development and mentions the obstacles to this development. It discusses the capability of the PSF as an instrument of maintaining regional security. The Qatari crisis, also described in this Chapter, serves as evidence for the severity of the contradictions which the GCC countries deal with while trying to accomplish their task. Chapter 1 treats general security concepts and political interests primarily on a theoretical basis. Chapter 2 is devoted to isolated analysis of every GCC member’s discrete military capability based on military expenditure rates, arms transfers contracts, annual military reports and other sources of information. This Chapter allows us to determine vectors of each state’s military development and strategies chosen by different governments. Chapter

3, which analyzes the GCC intervention in Yemen, shows how these strategies are applied in a real warfare, and analyzes whether they are successful or not. The conclusion summarizes the analysis results and estimates the GCC states' military capability of maintaining regional security.

In this thesis I argue that due to the contradictions between the states, lack of flexibility in the mechanisms of coordination and relatively low effectiveness of very expensive armies, the security of the GCC members and the region is not as solid as the GCC planned. The purpose of maintaining regional security solely by means of the GCC has not been reached yet.

## **Chapter 1: The GCC as a Regional Security Guarantor: Appearance and Development of the Idea**

In this chapter we will try to understand what caused the Gulf countries to start their integration process and will analyze its development until today. While the GCC is often related to as an economic union – which is also correct because the countries of the Gulf made considerable progress along this path during the 21<sup>st</sup> century – such a characterization actually represents only one dimension of its nature. Moreover, the most of the GCC development in this dimension is rather recent. Even though at the moment of establishment the GCC was officially proclaimed to be an economic entity and in its Charter, you cannot find a single word about military cooperation, it seems clear that security reasons were the primary catalyst that pushed the six countries to form the union.<sup>10</sup>

The most important among these reasons were:

- Retreat of Great Britain's military power from the region, which was completed and created a military and security vacuum in 1971. Even though the US would soon fill this "emptiness," for some time there was no guarantor of the existing order;
- When the US became the dominating power in the region, it chose a Shia country with strong regional ambitions, Iran, to represent its interests, which led to a strong dissatisfaction among the Gulf monarchies;
- After the Iranian Revolution (1979), the US lost control over one of the largest regional military powers, whose rhetoric became increasingly aggressive and hostile towards the Gulf states. The threats of the Islamic Republic were not empty.

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<sup>10</sup> "Annizam AlAsasi", [The Main Charter,] May 25, 1981. <http://www.gcc-sg.org/ar-sa/AboutGCC/Pages/Primarylaw.aspx>

In the year 1981, Bahraini intelligence reportedly uncovered a plot against the Emir of Bahrain and as a result 73 Shiites with ties to Iran were convicted.<sup>11</sup>

- The tensions between two global superpowers of the time – the US and USSR – and their will to take control of the region posed a danger of the Gulf countries losing political and economic independence.
- War between the two main regional military powers – Iran and Iraq – which broke out in 1980 formed a direct threat to the independence and security of the Gulf monarchies.<sup>12</sup>

All these factors intensified negotiations touching upon integration and cooperation between the Gulf monarchies. There were several projects proposed and each of them was considered and discussed by the future GCC members. Even though these proposals were declined, many ideas mentioned in them influenced the final agreement and future GCC development:

- Saudi Arabia proposed to boost military power in the Gulf by conducting a series of bilateral agreements providing military cooperation and development. As a result, there would be no unity, but ultimately every state's military capability would increase significantly.
- Oman's proposal was rather modest and cautious – to organize joint protection of the Hormuz strait, as it represents an extremely important but vulnerable strategic object;
- Bahrain's proposal was theoretically close to the final result, and reflected the idea of future Gulf security, even though it was not officially accepted.

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<sup>11</sup> Glenn P. Kuffel, *The Gulf Cooperation Council's Peninsular Shield Force*, (Report, Naval War College, 2000), 3

<sup>12</sup> Bandar Salman Mohammed Al-Saud, *The GCC Security Convention: A Legal And Practical Analysis*, PhD diss., (University of Glasgow, 1997), 16



Its main point was to create a joint military force capable of reacting quickly in case of any external threat.

However, at last the countries officially adopted the Kuwaiti proposal – forming an integrated union concentrating on economic, cultural and industrial cooperation.<sup>13</sup> Why did they choose this form of cooperation, even though it seems least responsive to their real goals of creating a joint effort to maintain regional security? The reasons behind this decision are actually clear: the countries did not want to concern Iran and Iraq with their growing regional ambitions. Yet even though some steps in the direction of economic integration were made in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, no groundbreaking progress was reached.

At the same time, the implementation of a military cooperation concept – even though this idea did not appear in the Charter – started to develop. Before the establishment of any military entity was announced, the countries conducted two military training exercises in 1981 and 1984. These trainings were respectively named “Peninsula Shield I” and “Peninsula Shield II”.<sup>14</sup> Later, while the Iran-Iraq war continued, the experience of these training exercise and the levels of cooperation reached allowed the GCC states to establish a joint military entity which represented the whole idea of the Council’s joint military effort – the Peninsula Shield Force.

#### **DOCTRINE, STRUCTURE, AND DEVELOPMENT OF THE PENINSULA SHIELD FORCE (PSF) BEFORE THE GULF WAR**

Conducting the 1984 joint “Peninsula Shield II” training exercise boosted integration negotiations and brought the PSF into existence. During the 5th GCC summit in Al-Kuwait the countries agreed to establish a military force united by joint command. At that period of time, the “symbolic” character of these forces was emphasized, and it was

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<sup>13</sup> Al-Saud, *The GCC Security Convention: A Legal And Practical Analysis*, 18

<sup>14</sup> Kuffel, *The Gulf Cooperation Council’s Peninsular Shield Force*, 4

also mentioned that the joint command would become just a temporary element, established for a certain period of time when required and disassembled again when not needed anymore. According to the final conference statement, these joint contingents were to be used “for protection of any other Gulf country *together* with its own military powers.” It is very important to understand that at the time the PSF *was not designed to be the main regional power in a defensive war* of any GCC member. The PSF would only assist the army of the country facing aggression.<sup>15</sup> The reasons for the countries’ unwillingness to give up a larger part of their military sovereignty was based – as it remains until now – on a considerable level of political mistrust and different understanding of national interests. We will discuss these issues more closely in the following paragraphs.

Right after the PSF’s formation, the number of its troops “on the ground” was 7,000 men housed in Hafr al Batin, Saudi Arabia.<sup>16</sup> In addition to the fact that such a number of men at arms was explicitly small in comparison with both Iraqi and Iranian forces, it represented an expeditionary land force and did not include naval or air forces. Theoretically though, this number of soldiers could be increased in case of external aggression. Until then, the mobilization plan and structure existed only “on paper” and mentioned the required number of troops any country was to send (see Table 1.1) According to such a strategy, in the time of war the GCC could deploy a contingent of around 10,000 troops. The types of units deployed –infantry, artillery etc. – were discussed and reconsidered several times during annual conferences.<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>15</sup> Elena Melkumyan and Grigory Kosach, “[Совет Сотрудничества Арабских Государств Залива как региональная военно-политическая организация]”, “The Gulf Cooperation Council as regional military and political organization,” *The University of Moscow Herald* 25, no. 4 (2012): 47

<sup>16</sup> Mohammed Faisal Alsiri, *Gulf Cooperation Council: Arabian Gulf Cooperation Countries Defense Forces (Peninsula Shield Force)*, School of Advanced Military Studies (United States Army Command and General Staff College), January 2015, 29

<sup>17</sup> Kuffel, *The Gulf Cooperation Council’s Peninsular Shield Force*, 10

Table 1.1. The PSF Mobilization Structure of 1986	
Saudi Arabia	1 Brigade
Kuwait	1 Battalion
Qatar	1 Company
UAE	1 Battalion
Bahrain	1 Company
Oman	1 Company

Table 1.1: The Gulf Cooperation Council's Peninsular Shield Force. Source: Kuffel, Glenn P. (Report, Naval War College, 2000)

The PSF chain of command had several shortcomings as well. Considering the modest size of the forces, the command structure itself was rather simple. At the top of it stood a Commanding General (always Saudi, as Saudi Arabia contributes most troops to the organization), then Deputy Commanding General (the position rotating between the other five members' officers) and below them – the commanders of Administrative, Intel, Ops, Logistics and Plans divisions. After Kuwaiti conflict, GCC Naval Liaison Officer and GCC Air Force Liaison Officer completed the chain. This structure is far from being ideal simply because the Commanding General always has to be a Saudi. This means that in case of conflict he would be responsible for both lives of all the other GCC soldiers and their countries' interests. This situation is further complicated as the activation of the PSF requires unanimous approval of the GCC Supreme Council (the rulers of all the six states) which significantly reduces flexibility of the organization and its capability to address the external aggression quickly (Figure 1.1).<sup>18</sup>

<sup>18</sup> Alsiri, *Gulf Cooperation Council: Arabian Gulf Cooperation Countries Defense Forces (Peninsula Shield Force)*, 30

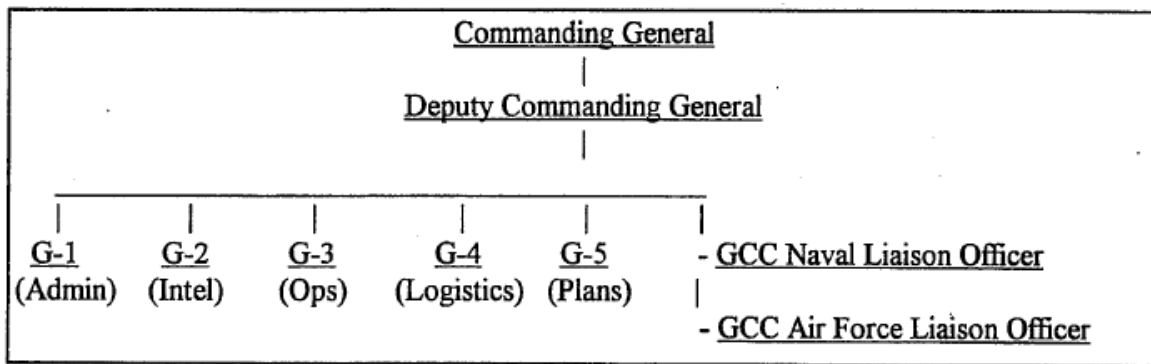


Figure 1.1: The Gulf Cooperation Council's Peninsular Shield Force. *Source: Kuffel, Glenn P. (Report, Naval War College, 2000)*

These shortcomings of the PSF organization became obvious at the very beginning. However, due to the considerable mistrust between the GCC members and their reluctance to delegate some of their military power to a supranational institution, further attempts to improve the structure were slowed down or paralyzed completely. Alternatively, the countries tried to boost their military capabilities by signing bilateral agreements between Saudi Arabia and every other member state apart from Kuwait which declined the offer “due to constitutional reasons.”<sup>19</sup>

#### THE POST-WAR DEVELOPMENT OF THE PSF

The Gulf War demonstrated an extremely deficient performance of the PSF. Even though the countries managed to overcome their political disputes and jointly condemned Iraqi aggression after the invasion, they could not do anything to prevent Kuwait from being overrun by Iraqi forces. In the foo, during the liberation of Kuwait, 3000 of the PSF

<sup>19</sup> Melkumyan, “The Gulf Cooperation Council as regional military and political organization,” 40

troops joined the forces of the coalition, but of course did not play a major role during the operation.<sup>20</sup> In this war, all of the PSF structural inconsistencies and weaknesses became obvious and proved that the “symbolic” PSF has little value in guaranteeing regional security.

The member states understood that and new proposals to improve the PSF structure were made thereafter. In 1991, shortly in the aftermath of the conflict, the GCC conducted a conference between their Chiefs of Staff in Muscat. During this meeting, the Omani side highlighted the ineffectiveness of the PSF and proposed to turn it into an independent supranational institute. This “renovated” PSF would consist of not less than 100,000 troops and its command would be formed on a rotational basis from the officers of the GCC member states.<sup>21</sup> In addition to it, in 1997 it was reported that the members agreed to rotate the position of Commanding General among all the six member states.<sup>22</sup> However, the contradictions and lack of trust between the members did not disappear after the Kuwaiti war, so both of these relatively decisive and potentially effective initiatives did not bear any fruit after becoming declined.

The PSF continued to develop slowly during the following decades. In the years 1995 and 2001 the GCC claimed to establish two anti-air systems inside the PSF framework – “The Peace Shield” and “Cooperation Belt.” The established systems use American “AWACS” radars and American anti-air missiles.<sup>23</sup> In addition, in 2002 it was decided to increase the armed personnel number, and by 2012 it reached 40,000.<sup>24</sup> Still, these

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<sup>20</sup>Maisa Mohammed Abdullah Al-Jabri, *Gulf Security: Peninsula Shield Force and Iran*, March 15, 2017. [https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Maisa\\_Aljabri/publication/316666885\\_Gulf\\_Security\\_Peninsula\\_Shield\\_Force\\_and\\_Iran/links/590af988458515ebb4a6bda1/Gulf-Security-Peninsula-Shield-Force-and-Iran.pdf](https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Maisa_Aljabri/publication/316666885_Gulf_Security_Peninsula_Shield_Force_and_Iran/links/590af988458515ebb4a6bda1/Gulf-Security-Peninsula-Shield-Force-and-Iran.pdf), 3

<sup>21</sup> Melkumyan, “The Gulf Cooperation Council as regional military and political organization,” 47

<sup>22</sup> Alsiri, *Gulf Cooperation Council: Arabian Gulf Cooperation Countries Defense Forces (Peninsula Shield Force)*, 30-31

<sup>23</sup> Melkumyan, “The Gulf Cooperation Council as regional military and political organization,” 48

<sup>24</sup>Al-Jabri, *Gulf Security: Peninsula Shield Force and Iran*, March 15, 2017.

improvements did not solve the basic problems which are lack of flexibility and coordination, inconsistencies inside the structure and dependence on the assistance of the national armies' naval and air forces. The arms supplies for the PSF do not follow any joint pattern, as the organization lacks any military doctrine, so in case of actual warfare the maintenance of supply lines could become problematic.

For these reasons, the PSF has only been used two times since the Gulf War. The first case was a “passive,” non-warfare event, as it only included deploying the PSF force into Kuwait in 2003 in order to prevent “the potential Iraqi threat,” which did not appear after all. The second time the PSF was used to assist Bahrain in suppressing its 2011 demonstrations. The “warfare” against hardly armed demonstrators could not be called a serious test for an organization crafted to protect regional security against such threats as Iran or any other considerable military power.<sup>25</sup> At the same time, during the biggest and arguably the most important GCC military operation since its establishment – intervention in Yemen – the PSF could not be deployed due to Oman’s declination to participate, which again raised questions about the effectiveness of the Force in its present form.

## **THE GCC DIVIDED: MAIN CONTRADICTIONS AND QATARI CRISIS**

The previous chapter stated considerable doubts about the PSF as an effective regional security guarantor. In it, I have mentioned multiple contradictions and conflicts of interests between the GCC members. One of the most basic and primary functions of armies – at least in the states where the army and the government represent separate institutions – is usually to assure that the state will remain independent and conduct its

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[https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Maisa\\_Aljabri/publication/316666885\\_Gulf\\_Security\\_Peninsula\\_Shield\\_Force\\_and\\_Iran/links/590af988458515ebb4a6bda1/Gulf-Security-Peninsula-Shield-Force-and-Iran.pdf](https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Maisa_Aljabri/publication/316666885_Gulf_Security_Peninsula_Shield_Force_and_Iran/links/590af988458515ebb4a6bda1/Gulf-Security-Peninsula-Shield-Force-and-Iran.pdf), 3

<sup>25</sup> Melkumyan, “The Gulf Cooperation Council as regional military and political organization,” 48

independent policies, not fearing the interference of a foreign power. Subsequently, if the countries' interests do not fall together, military coordination perspectives become doubtful, for a joint military force cannot represent different or conflicting interests. What are these contradictions? Of course, partly they lie in the military sphere: differences in the views upon the military development, different military doctrines and capacities, different ideas of military spending importance etc. But actually such issues have plagued the GCC from the very beginning in every sphere of cooperation: economic, trade, cultural, military, social etc.

First of all, when analyzing today's integration processes within economic entities around the world (European Union, NAFTA, GAFTA and others), we inevitably stumble upon the countries' unwillingness to share political/economic/military power and their fear to lose it, damaging their own interests. This unwillingness does not allow the European Union to continue its, until now, very successful path to a united state, and it also has ruined the effectiveness of many Arab League activities. This factor becomes even more serious in cases when there are those enjoying undisputed economic, territorial or military dominance among integrated countries. In such a situation, the danger always exists that transferring some part (or all of it) of economic and political power and responsibilities to the supra-national institutions will serve not the joint interests of an integrational unity but benefit of a prevailing country. For instance, in the European Union there are two countries which *de facto* are the leaders of the unity and which play the major role in its internal and external policies: Germany and France. Of course, in the case of Europe the mistrust among the leaders and the other countries is significantly less than in the other instances (one of them is the example of the failure of the AMU, where the ambitions of Kaddafi's Libya played a huge role in the destruction of the Arab Maghreb Union). But even in today's Europe, with the rise of Euroscepticism, the voices claiming that Germany and France

represent danger to sovereignty of the other, less developed or just poorer countries, are growing stronger.<sup>26</sup>

In the GCC case, Saudi Arabia is the superior country. Economically, the GDP of Saudi Arabia – even after the start of the oil crisis (2014) – exceeds the combined GDP of its two main pursuers: the UAE and Qatar (Figure 2.1).<sup>27</sup> The population of the country exceeds all the rest of the GCC combined and territorially it occupies more than 83% of the GCC total geographic area. In addition, for a long time Saudi Arabia has remained the main USA ally in the region, and it does not hesitate to use its capabilities to spread its influence around the world, even if the manner of these actions becomes rather aggressive. Suspicion regarding true Saudi intentions crawls into every sphere of cooperation. It led to multiple delays in economic integration and alterations in the plans of transferring economic responsibilities to supra-national institutes. As of today, it seems that such suspicions have finally brought down the plans of forming the Gulf Monetary Union. These plans which have already been discussed for almost twenty years did not lead to any results. In the year 2008, when the Monetary Council was established, and a Saudi minister chosen for the director's seat, the UAE declined to accept voting results which declared the headquarters of the new organ were to be placed in Riyadh and not Abu-Dhabi.<sup>28</sup>

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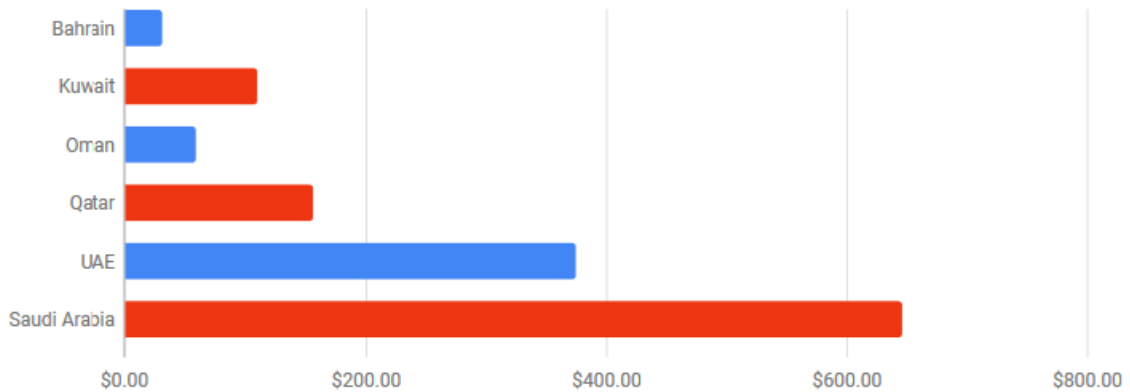
<sup>26</sup> Stuart Jeffries, "Is Germany Too Powerful for Europe?," the Guardian, March 31, 2013, <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2013/mar/31/is-germany-too-powerful-for-europe> & Brendan Simms, "Germany's triumph: from the ruins of war, how a new European empire was built," *The New Statesman*, July 30, 2015, <https://www.newstatesman.com/politics/2015/07/germany-s-triumph-ruins-war-how-new-european-empire-was-built> & Richard Palmer, "Greece to Remain a European Colony Until 2060," *The Trumpet*, February 27, 2017, <https://www.thetrumpet.com/16984-greece-to-remain-a-european-colony-until-2060>

<sup>27</sup> "GCC countries by GDP (2016)," <http://investinggroup.org/data/65/gcc-countries-by-gdp-2016/>

<sup>28</sup> Nour Malas, Maria Abi-Habib and Tahani Karrar, "U.A.E. Quits Gulf Monetary Union," *The Wall Street Journal*, Updated May 21, 2009, <https://www.wsj.com/articles/SB124285038025540481>.



# GCC countries by GDP (2016)



Source: IMF World Economic Outlook

Figure 2.1: GCC countries by GDP (2016)

The potential of integration seems even more doubtful in light of growing ambitions of two states: UAE and Qatar. Evident in Figure 2.1, the UAE and Qatar follow Saudi Arabia according to GDP. In addition to that, throughout the past two decades, the UAE has made significant progress in diversifying its industries and today the country possesses a much more flexible economy than Saudi Arabia. Another important aspect is that the financial reserves of UAE and Qatar exceed those of Saudi Arabia, which is becoming more and more important today as oil prices continue to fall. These factors increase the economic importance of these states (especially of the UAE, the economic power of which

depends much less on the hydrocarbon exports) and their desire to conduct independent policies.<sup>29</sup>

However, Bahrain and Oman have also played roles in undermining integration processes. In 2004 and 2008, Bahrain and Oman signed agreements with the USA according to which free trade zones were established between the US and each of these countries separately.<sup>30</sup> Now such negotiations are continuing with Qatar and the UAE. These agreements undermine the whole idea of the GCC customs union as long as the goods entering one country duty-free will not face any customs when entering another state of the union, even though that state does not have an agreement with the third side (the US). However, only Saudi Arabia implemented sanctions towards Bahrain in 2004, restricting imports from the country.

The described tendencies clearly show that the smaller countries of the Gulf feel more concerned about their own interests than the success and development of the integration. Moreover, it seems obvious that in many cases the GCC countries do not consider further integration as a means to accomplish these interests. If so, due to the failure of civilian integration, military integration will inevitably stagnate unless a very deep and existential outside threat appears in the region. Not so long ago Iran could have represented such a threat, but recently its role has become much more ambiguous. In 2017, the situation in the region changed dramatically, moving the GCC from stagnating military cooperation to the verge of military confrontation inside the GCC. Of course, I am writing about the

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<sup>29</sup> “Middle East and North Africa Regional Economic Outlook Oil, Conflicts, and Transitions,” *IMF*, May5, 2015. <https://www.imf.org/external/pubs/ft/reo/2015/mcd/eng/pdf/mreo0515p.pdf>

<sup>30</sup> “США заключили соглашение о свободной торговле с Оманом” [The US signed the Free Trade Zone Deal with Oman], *Vzglyad*, <http://www.barrit.ru/cgi-bin/offshore.cgi?c=r&id=593> and “Alwast” tanfaridu bi nashri nus ittifaki attijarati beina albahrein ua amrika [“Al-Wast” Provides a Unique Copy of Free Trade Agreement between Bahrein and the US], *Al-Wast*, <http://www.alwasatnews.com/news/393474.html>

conflict between Qatar and other five members of the GCC, which has already changed the alignment of forces in the Gulf.

### **QATARI CRISIS AND THE REASONS BEHIND IT**

The current crisis has deep roots going into the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Since the 1970s, when all the Gulf countries finally gained independence, the region experienced multiple and sometimes rather aggressive territorial disputes between the member states. One of the longest and furious episodes happened between Qatar and Saudi Arabia. It lasted from 1974 until 1999, and the disputed territory was the Al-Hufus area, which represented the only land segment between Qatar and the UAE, and therefore became extremely important for trade. The dispute was solved in favor of Saudi Arabia, but it definitely left a mark on the history of the two countries' relations. Some scholars even suggest that Saudi Arabia, in order to resolve this issue the way the government wanted, was involved in the coup overthrowing the Emir of Qatar.<sup>31</sup> However, I find this claim doubtful as it was actually the Emir's son, Tamim bin Hamad Al Thani, who moved the political vector of his country out of Saudi "waterway." This became possible because in the beginning of the 1990s, Qatar started diversifying its exports by introducing LNG (liquefied natural gas) technology. Since then, the exports of this fuel have grown rapidly. Qatar has continued to increase its LNG exports since then, which allowed this relatively small country to increase its GDP from \$8.1bn in the year 1995 to an impressive \$210bn in 2014.<sup>32</sup>

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<sup>31</sup> Maxim Subh [GCC: Integration Against the Background of Serious Internal Contradictions], [Institute of the Middle Eastern Studies], June 14, 2012

<sup>32</sup>Max Fisher, "How the Saudi-Qatar Rivalry, Now Combusting, Reshaped the Middle East," New York Times, June 13, 2017, <https://www.nytimes.com/2017/06/13/world/middleeast/how-the-saudi-qatar-rivalry-now-combusting-reshaped-the-middle-east.html>. and BP Energy Outlook, 2017 edition, <https://www.bp.com/content/dam/bp/pdf/energy-economics/energy-outlook-2017/bp-energy-outlook-2017.pdf>.

With such tremendous economic growth, political ambitions came – together with the will to stop following Saudi leads in international issues. Al-Jazeera channel, founded in 1996, became one of the most important means of realizing these ambitions. Since its inception, the channel has been very unpopular with Saudi and several other ruling families of the Gulf. Throughout the first decade of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, Al-Jazeera repeatedly reported on bans and blocked broadcasts in several countries, including Saudi Arabia.<sup>33</sup> The channel has become an impactful source of Qatari anti-Saudi propaganda. Since the date of its establishment, several channels have been launched to lessen its impact. Al-Arabiya, Dubai-based and Saudi-funded, has become the most successful project in this sense.

Still, these projects were not successful enough – and Al-Jazeera remained the best-watched Arabic news channel with viewer ratings exceeding 53% in 2014. This result exceeded the next four followers' results combined, including the one of Al-Arabiya.<sup>34</sup> That allowed Al-Jazeera to play a special role during the Arab Spring in 2011. As the revolutionary movements appeared in several Arab countries, including Tunisia, Syria, Egypt and others, Al-Jazeera started to support the anti-governmental organizations, both pro-democratic and Islamic (for instance, Muslim Brotherhood), while Saudi Arabia concentrated on supporting the existing regimes for the sake of maintaining and increasing its influence. The aim of Saudi Arabia was to avoid instability in the region, and especially in the monarchies (such as Morocco and Jordan) out of fear that the unrest would spread to the Kingdom's territory. In the year 2011, Saudi Arabia allocated \$5bn to both Jordan and Morocco, and lifted the long-standing barriers to its own fruit markets to support the

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<sup>33</sup> "Watchdog blasts al-Jazeera bans," BBC News, last updated January 28, 2005, <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/europe/4215199.stm>.

<sup>34</sup> "Al-Jazeera al-aksar mushahida arabiya," [Al-Jazeera is the best-watched Arabic Channel], December 24, 2014, <http://www.aljazeera.net/news/arabic/2014/12/24/%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%AC%D8%B2%D9%8A%D8%B1%D8%A9-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%A3%D9%83%D8%AB%D8%B1-%D9%85%D8%B4%D8%A7%D9%87%D8%AF%D8%A9-%D8%B9%D8%B1%D8%A8%D9%8A%D8%A7>

regimes financially.<sup>35</sup> At the same time, Al-Jazeera's coverage of the protests in these two countries remained very pro-opposition.<sup>36</sup> The only Arab Spring protest which was not sufficiently covered by the channel remained the Bahraini demonstrations, where Qatar did not risk of opposing the GCC directly.<sup>37</sup> Nevertheless, after the diplomatic crisis had broken out, shutting Al-Jazeera down became one of the first demands of the opposing GCC countries.<sup>38</sup>

However, Al-Jazeera was not the only means for Qatar to spread its influence and throw sand into Saudi wheels. Qatar was repeatedly accused of supporting different, more or less radical, Islamic groups. Multiple sources claim close relations of the country with Al-Qaeda, but the evidence is rather unclear.<sup>39</sup> It has also shown a significant support for the Tunisian revolutionary government: similar to the post-Spring Saudi support of Morocco and Jordan, Qatar helped the Tunisian regime both financially and with resources. Especially noteworthy was an announcement in May 2012 of Qatari plans to construct a refinery on Tunisia's Gulf of Gabes coast at La Skhira with an output of 120,000 barrels per day. The \$2 billion project would allow Tunisia to refine oil from neighboring Libya and develop its potential as an export hub for refined products, massively expanding capacity beyond the aging 35,000 bar/d Bizerte refinery.<sup>40</sup> But the closest ties were built with the Muslim Brotherhood, the movement responsible for a huge part of the Arab Spring

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<sup>35</sup> Guido Steinberg, *Leading the Counter-Revolution, Saudi Arabia and the Arab Spring*

<sup>36</sup> Noura Alalawi, "How Media Covered "Arab Spring" Movement: Comparison between the American Fox News and the Middle Eastern Al Jazeera" *Cross Cultural Communication* 11, no 10, 1-5

<sup>37</sup> Ibid

<sup>38</sup> "Arab states issue 13 demands to end Qatar-Gulf crisis," *Al-Jazeera*, July 11, 2017, <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2017/06/arab-states-issue-list-demands-qatar-crisis-170623022133024.html>

<sup>39</sup> The Editorial Board, "Fighting, While Funding, Extremists," *New York Times*, June 19, 2017, <https://www.nytimes.com/2017/06/19/opinion/saudi-arabia-qatar-isis-terrorism.html>.

<sup>40</sup> Kristian Coates Ulrichsen, "Qatar and the Arab Spring: Policy Drivers and Regional Implications," *Carnegie Endowment for International Peace*, September 24, 2014, <http://carnegieendowment.org/2014/09/24/qatar-and-arab-spring-policy-drivers-and-regional-implications-pub-56723>.

uprisings and which came to power in Egypt (even though for a rather short time). These ties went back to the 1950s, when Egyptian members of the movement, seeking refuge from prosecution, found it in Qatar (since then, Qatar has gained an ambivalent reputation for extremist-asylum, providing refuge for many other prosecuted radicals). These ties have never disappeared. As a result, when the Arab Spring broke out, Qatar had every possibility to influence the demonstrations and protests. And if the supported groups came to power – Qatar helped them financially, with resources and by any other means in order to establish the regimes depending on their money, and potentially opposed to Saudi Arabia. On a visit to Cairo in September 2012, Hamad bin Jassim announced that Qatar would invest a total of \$18 billion in Egypt over five years. Commenting that there would be “no limits” to Qatar’s support, the Qatari prime minister stated that \$8 billion would be invested in an integrated power plant, natural gas, and iron steel project in Port Said, while the remaining \$10 billion would finance the construction of a tourism marina complex on the Mediterranean coastline.<sup>41</sup> However, Qatar lost this gamble, as the counter-revolutionary As-Sisi regime was supported by Saudi Arabia and overthrew pro-Qatari Mursi.

In addition to these points, one should mention that Qatari-Iranian relations have always been warmer than they “should,” according to the joint GCC position led by Saudi Arabia. Even though Qatar joined the international sanctions against Iran from 2010 to 2016, and no Qatari entity – according to the US information – has violated the sanctions regime, the country continued to enjoy some friendly ties with the GCC rival.<sup>42</sup> Qatari leaders have always followed the position that only a constructive dialogue would lead to

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<sup>41</sup> Kristian Coates Ulrichsen, “Qatar and the Arab Spring: Policy Drivers and Regional Implications,” Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, September 24, 2014, <http://carnegieendowment.org/2014/09/24/qatar-and-arab-spring-policy-drivers-and-regional-implications-pub-56723>

<sup>42</sup> Kenneth Katzman, *Qatar: Governance, Security, and U.S. Policy*, March 1, 2018. <https://fas.org/sgp/crs/mideast/R44533.pdf>

the resolution of the GCC-Iranian tensions. Such a position seems rather understandable. Qatar and Iran share the largest gas field in the world, which is the North Dome field.<sup>43</sup> A sea border splits the field in two parts – Bahraini and Iranian – but, unlike the border issue with Saudi Arabia, the demarcation went smoothly and almost without tensions, and was finished in the year 1969. Further on, when sanctions were enacted against Iran, Qatar offered its help in developing the Northern part of the field. The reason behind this was that Qatar feared Iran might try to boost gas production after the implementation of sanctions (Iran had previously struggled with increasing the output), which would put the whole field in danger.<sup>44</sup> However, this gesture could be still counted as a friendly one, as long as Qatar could have chosen a much more ultimate position towards weakened and isolated Iran. Intentions to improve relations between the two countries proved to be true in 2013, when Hassan Rouhani was elected president in Iran, and further cooperation in the field development followed. This policy of avoiding “burned bridges” determined the rapid development of relations between Qatar and Iran after the crisis outbreak.

### **CRISIS AND ITS AFTERMATH**

The previous part of this Chapter gives us enough information to understand that any events directly preceding the outbreak of the crisis determined it in the same manner as the assassination of Franz Ferdinand determined the beginning of the World War I. Obviously, the conflict between Qatar and the rest of the GCC happened predictably and logically, as it was fueled by years and decades of economic and political discrepancies, bilateral suspicion, hidden and sometimes almost open acts of hostility etc. The hacking

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<sup>43</sup> “Qatar-Iran ties: Sharing the world's largest gas field,” Al Jazeera News, June 15, 2017, <https://www.aljazeera.com/indepth/interactive/2017/06/qatar-north-dome-iran-south-pars-glance-Ing-gas-field-170614131849685.html>.

<sup>44</sup> Mardo Soghom, “The Economic Incentive Behind Qatar's Iran Ties,” *Radio Farda*, June 5, 2017, <https://en.radiofarda.com/a/iran-qatar--relations-economic-gas-fields-south-pars/28529537.html>.

incident of the UAE ambassador emails (according to them, he had ties to a pro-Israeli American think-tank), as well as the following hacking of Al-Jazeera (when its site allegedly distributed fake Qatari emir's statements) became merely an occasion to start the confrontation.

June 5, 2017, four countries - Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, the UAE and Egypt cut their relations with Qatar and put the start to what is sometimes called in the media the "Siege of Qatar"<sup>45</sup>. Later on, Jordan also announced a scale-down in its diplomatic ties with Qatar and shut down the Al-Jazeera bureau in Amman. As you can see, both Egypt and Jordan, where Qatar tried to support the opposition but failed to overpower Saudi influence, supported the measures against it. While Kuwait and Oman did not join the siege and claimed to become "the mediators" to resolve the conflict peacefully, one should understand that neither of these countries possesses enough weight to influence Saudi Arabia and the UAE in the GCC. Soon after severing relations, a list of 13 conditions for Qatar to fulfill was published by the states implementing the siege. Here are the conditions:

- Curb diplomatic ties with Iran and close its diplomatic missions there. Expel members of Iran's Revolutionary Guard from Qatar and cut off any joint military cooperation with Iran. Only trade and commerce with Iran that complies with U.S. and international sanctions will be permitted;
- Sever all ties to "terrorist organizations," specifically the Muslim Brotherhood, the Islamic State group, al-Qaida, and Lebanon's Hezbollah. Formally declare those entities as terrorist groups;
- Shut down Al-Jazeera and its affiliate stations;
- Shut down news outlets that Qatar funds, directly and indirectly, including Arabi21,

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<sup>45</sup> "Siege of Qatar 'arbitrarily splitting up families'," *Al Jazeera News*, December 14, 2017, <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2017/12/siege-qatar-arbitrarily-splitting-families-171214163542163.html>.



Rassd, Al Araby Al-Jadeed and Middle East Eye;

— Immediately terminate the Turkish military presence currently in Qatar and end any joint military cooperation with Turkey inside of Qatar;

— Stop all means of funding for individuals, groups or organizations that have been designated as terrorists by Saudi Arabia, the UAE, Egypt, Bahrain, the United States and other countries;

— Hand over “terrorist figures” and wanted individuals from Saudi Arabia, the UAE, Egypt and Bahrain to their countries of origin. Freeze their assets, and provide any desired information about their residency, movements and finances;

— End interference in sovereign countries’ internal affairs. Stop granting citizenship to wanted nationals from Saudi Arabia, the UAE, Egypt and Bahrain. Revoke Qatari citizenship for existing nationals where such citizenship violates those countries’ laws;

— Stop all contacts with the political opposition in Saudi Arabia, the UAE, Egypt and Bahrain. Hand over all files detailing Qatar’s prior contacts with and support for those opposition groups;

— Pay reparations and compensation for loss of life and other, financial losses caused by Qatar’s policies in recent years. The sum will be determined in coordination with Qatar;

— Align itself with the other Gulf and Arab countries militarily, politically, socially and economically, as well as on economic matters, in line with an agreement reached with Saudi Arabia in 2014;

— Agree to all the demands within 10 days of it being submitted to Qatar, or the list becomes invalid. The document doesn’t specify what the countries will do if Qatar refuses to comply;

— Consent to monthly audits for the first year after agreeing to the demands, then once per

quarter during the second year. For the following 10 years, Qatar would be monitored annually for compliance.<sup>46</sup>

As one may see, these demands fit perfectly well into the picture described in the previous part of the chapter. If the demanding countries reach success, these measures will cut all the ways of Qatari influence both in the region and internationally. Al-Jazeera, in such a case, would stop spreading Qatari agenda, deportation of rebellious extremists would worsen the relations with radical organizations abroad and monitoring would assure that those contracts wouldn't renew. In addition, stopping the cooperation with Turkey and Iran would make Qatar extremely dependent on the GCC states – the UAE and Saudi Arabia – and deprive it of any support in case of pressure from their side. So, this list represents an ultimatum telling Qatar that its hostile policies will not be accepted anymore.

In today's political and economic situation in the Middle East it seems unlikely that the sieging countries really believe those conditions would be fulfilled. In the time of oil crisis, when all of the countries' economies are meeting severe hardships and the political atmosphere becomes more and more heated due to wars in Iraq, Syria and Yemen, unrest in Lebanon and chaos in Libya, it would seem logical for the GCC to try finding common ground for a diplomatic resolution to their differences in order to protect the Gulf from unrest. But with the passage of time it becomes more and more apparent that the sieging countries are not ready for a compromise. Even more – it might turn out that Qatar also does not believe in such compromise. The sieging coalition position remains extreme. On the third of March, 2018, UAE Minister of Foreign Affairs Gargash claimed that “If [the Qataris] steer clear from desperate actions and stop beating around the bush, their

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<sup>46</sup> “List of demands on Qatar by Saudi Arabia, other Arab nations,” The Associated Press, June 23, 2017, <https://apnews.com/3a58461737c44ad58047562e48f46e06>.

remaining options are clear. [They must] stop inflicting harm or accept isolation.”<sup>47</sup> Throughout almost a year of confrontation, the sieging states never stopped accusing Qatar of supporting terrorism and damaging the regional security.<sup>48</sup> Meantime, the Qatari position remains (at least officially) open to dialogue, but firm and not receptive to the ultimatum. On July, 27, Qatar's foreign minister said the list had stipulations that couldn't be met and was "made to be rejected."<sup>49</sup>

Even though formally Qatar continues to accept Kuwaiti and Omani mediation, stress its readiness to negotiate and unwillingness to further escalate the conflict, the country has chosen to follow the old wisdom and not to let their probable desire of peace interfere with preparing to war. So far, the country has been tightening its relations with the non-GCC powerful actors. The first and the most obvious examples are Turkey and Iran. Almost since the very beginning of the conflict Qatar reported via Al-Jazeera that both countries “stand by” Qatar in the developing crisis.<sup>50</sup> While the intentions of Turkey and Iran cannot be clearly estimated, gestures of friendship as well as some amount of support are obvious.

Qatar represents a country mostly covered by desert, so most of the food – especially after modernization, an increase in the quality of life and population growth – has been imported. Figure 3.1 shows that in pre-crisis 2015, 49% of all food products were imported from the GCC member states. For instance, the major part of milk and poultry came via Saudi Arabia, while Qatari milk production covered only around 15% of total

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<sup>47</sup> “UAE Minister of Foreign Affairs Gargash: Solution to Qatar’s crisis is Riyadh,” *Al Arabiya English*, March 3, 2018, <https://english.alarabiya.net/en/News/gulf/2018/03/03/UAE-Minister-Gargash-Qatar-should-stop-inflicting-harm-or-accept-isolation-.html>.

<sup>48</sup> “Qatar’s ‘support for terror continues unabated’,” *Gulf News*, February 28, 2018, <http://gulfnews.com/news/gulf/qatar/qatar-crisis/qatar-s-support-for-terror-continues-unabated-1.2181052>.

<sup>49</sup> Susannah Cullinane, Jomana Karadesh and Victoria Brown, “Qatar delivers response to demands from Saudi-led bloc,” *CNN*, July 27, 2017,

<sup>50</sup> Dorian Jones, “Turkey Stands by Qatar in Ongoing Crisis,” *VOA News*, June 23, 2017. <https://www.voanews.com/a/turkey-stands-by-qatar-in-ongoing-crisis/3913479.html>

consumption, and the overall food product output reached only 7.2% of consumption.<sup>51</sup> After the borders were shut down, thousands of trucks were stopped by the guards, unable to cross the barrier dividing the countries.<sup>52</sup> Overnight, the food security of the country became a very important and urgent concern. Turkey used that chance to immediately show their support for Qatar and in less than 48 hours after the outburst of the crisis Turkey sent cargo deliveries with milk and poultry to Qatari shores. During the four following months, according to Turkey's exporting association, the country increased its exports by 90%.<sup>53</sup> Iran took the same steps in supporting Qatari food security. Soon after the borders' shutdown, it started to export food via planes and as early as June, 11, more than 100 tons of fruits and vegetables came to Qatar by air.<sup>54</sup>

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<sup>51</sup> Emel Aktas, *SAFE-Q: Safeguarding Food and Environment in Qatar* (Presented at Eco food supply chains, August 25, 2015). <https://www.slideshare.net/EmelAktas/safeq-safeguarding-food-and-environment-in-qatar>

<sup>52</sup> Jonathan Saul and Maha El Dahan, "1-Qatar food imports hit after Arab nations cut ties - trade sources," Reuters, June 5, 2017, <https://www.reuters.com/article/gulf-qatar-food/update-1-qatar-food-imports-hit-after-arab-nations-cut-ties-trade-sources-idUSL8N1J23IC>.

<sup>53</sup> "How Turkey stood by Qatar amid the Gulf crisis," Al Jazeera News, November 14, 2017, <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2017/11/turkey-stood-qatar-gulf-crisis-171114135404142.html>.

<sup>54</sup> Samuel Osborne, "Qatar crisis: Iran begins food aid flights into nation isolated by Arab neighbours," Independent, <http://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/middle-east/qatar-crisis-iran-food-flights-shortages-isolated-by-arab-neighbours-saudi-arabia-a7784871.html>.

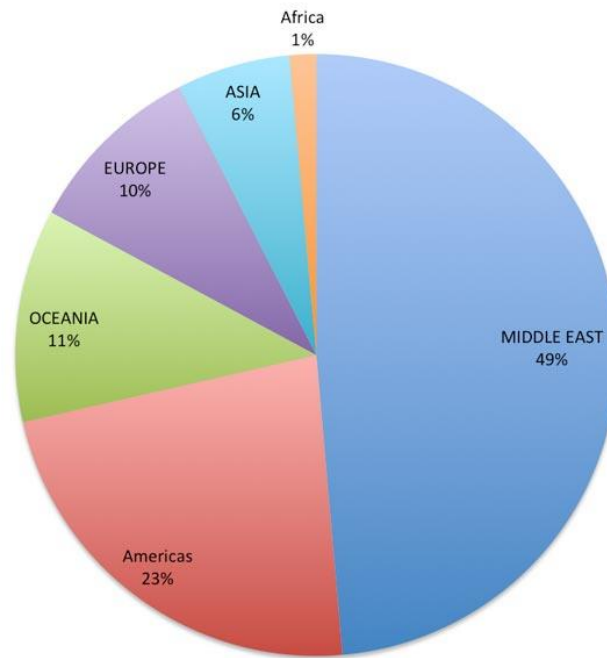


Figure 3.1: The Structure of Qatar Food Imports by Region (2015). Source: <http://www.dohafamily.com/Winter-2015/Where-does-our-food-come-from-An-insight-into-Qatars-food-industry/>

In addition to diplomatic and economic ties Qatar decided to “diversify” its military cooperation. As already mentioned, military cooperation between Qatar and Turkey began before the siege, and long-standing rumors about military ties with Iran were never confirmed by trustworthy sources. On the 7<sup>th</sup> of June, immediately after the crisis outbreak, Turkey's parliament ratified two earlier deals – one of them allowing Turkish troops to be deployed in Qatar, and another approving an accord between the two countries on military training cooperation.<sup>55</sup> The sides have also announced plans to increase the number of Turkish military personnel on the territory of Qatar up to 3,000 men and women. If the

<sup>55</sup> “How Turkey stood by Qatar amid the Gulf crisis,” Al Jazeera News, November 14, 2017, <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2017/11/turkey-stood-qatar-gulf-crisis-171114135404142.html>.

plan is implemented, this Turkish contingent will become a considerable force. For comparison, the pre-crisis PSF personnel counted around 30,000 men and women.<sup>56</sup>

As for the claims of military cooperation between Iran and Qatar, there is no clear evidence that it exists. Several sources claim that as early as 2015, the two countries signed a treaty named “Fighting terrorism and addressing the elements that undermine security in the region.”<sup>57</sup> They trace it to multiple diplomatic contacts between Iran and Qatar and blame Qatar for thinking of Iran as a measure to fight Gulf threats, while actually Iran is one of these threats. However, most of the information about such activities come from Al-Arabiya channel and other Arab channels which could probably just reproduce Al-Arabiya news or be influenced by Saudi Arabiya as well. On the one hand, lack of such evidence could make us suppose that these alleged ties are just an instrument of propaganda against Qatar. On the other hand, it does not make sense that the sieging coalition put “cutting off any joint military cooperation with Iran” at the very beginning of the demands list. But in any case, the recent visit of Iranian foreign minister to Qatar and the official full restoring of diplomatic relationships between the states definitely serves as a sign of gradual cooperation development.<sup>58</sup>

The ongoing military conflict between Qatar and the GCC poses a serious threat towards the future of the entity. It not only makes the progress along the vector of

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<sup>56</sup> Dr. Zafer Muhammad Alajmi, “Gulf Military Cooperation: Tangible Gains or Limited Results?,” March 31, 2015, Al Jazeera Centre for studies, <http://studies.aljazeera.net/en/dossiers/2015/03/201533164429153675.html>.

<sup>57</sup> “Tafasil Alalaka alamania ua askaria beina Iran ua Qatar,” [The details of security and military relations between Iran and Qatar], Al-Arabiya, May 24, 2017. <http://www.alarabiya.net/ar/iran/2017/05/24/%D8%AA%D9%81%D8%A7%D8%B5%D9%8A%D9%84-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%B9%D9%84%D8%A7%D9%82%D8%A7%D8%AA-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%AF%D8%A7%D9%81%D8%A6%D8%A9-%D8%A8%D9%8A%D9%86-%D9%82%D8%B7%D8%B1-%D9%88%D8%A5%D9%8A%D8%B1%D8%A7%D9%86.html>

<sup>58</sup> Babak Dehghanpisheh and Larry King, “Iranian foreign minister urges regional cooperation after returning from Oman, Qatar,” *Reuters*, October 3, 2017, <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-iran-gulf-zarif/iranian-foreign-minister-urges-regional-cooperation-after-returning-from-oman-qatar-idUSKCN1C82C6>.

deepening military cooperation and integration stagnate – this conflict is weakening the entity and poses a threat to regional security itself. As long as the GCC military union seems more and more fragile, its members should rely on their own forces for the sake of stability and security. The next chapter analyzes these forces.

## **Chapter 2: Military Characteristics of the GCC states (2011 until now)**

The previous chapters of the thesis gave the reader a clear idea that, due to the contradictions within the GCC, the concept of providing regional security by means of joint effort and through the PSF structures did not work in the past and seems more and more doubtful today and in the future. However, in order to estimate the capability of the GCC in securing their territory and sovereignty we will need to analyze military capability of every state. This chapter will examine the overall condition of every state's army and try to understand, how each of these countries sees the purpose of defending itself. The analysis will be based on Figures 4.1, 4.2 and Table 2.1 (arms transfers in the years 2011-2018, with and without Saudi Arabia), Table 2.2 (relation of military expenditure to GDP) and Table 3.1 (military expenditure in 2016-2017). All of the mentioned figures and tables are presented at the end of this chapter, apart from Table 3.1 which you may find in Appendix..

### **BAHRAIN**

Bahrain represents the smallest country in the GCC, with the smallest gross military expenditure. Even though its military expenditure/GDP ratio is not the lowest one (during the period 2011-2017, it was volatile and changed between 3.63% and 4.94%), the country does not represent a considerable military power in the Gulf. Just as in the economic sphere, where due to the insignificant oil reserves the country depends on financial support of other GCC members, in the military sphere Bahrain will most likely delegate protection of its sovereignty to other states, first of all – to Saudi Arabia. This was exactly the case in 2011, when the PSF forces were used to prevent the alleged “internal threat” – people's demonstrations in the country.



Even though Bahrain's army is the smallest in the Gulf (6,000) people, according to the Military Balance annual report journal, it is well equipped and trained.<sup>59</sup> Even though Bahrain cannot play any decisive role in any warfare due to the small size of its military, its Air Force took part in Yemeni Civil war on the side of Saudi-led coalition and fought against ISIS in Syria.

The arms purchased are generally defensive: armored protected vehicles (Turkish "Cobra"), anti-tank missiles (Russian "Kornets"), combat ac radars and others. Most of the arms come from the US, but Bahrain tries to diversify its imports, buying arms from other NATO members (France, Turkey, UK etc.) and from non-NATO countries like Russia and China. The country almost did not react to the oil crisis, Qatari crisis and coalition intervention to Yemen: the military budget remained stable during the 2011-2017 period, even though its share of GDP changed slightly due to the GDP volatility.

## **KUWAIT**

Kuwait is the third smallest country of the GCC. Even though its army size is almost twice as large as Bahrain's – 11,000 soldiers + more than 20,000 in reserve – Military Balance report considers the task of resisting foreign aggression with such an army size on a small territory extremely problematic.<sup>60</sup> Even though Kuwait increased arms imports significantly after Iraqi aggression, the country's geographic and demographic situation makes it rely on its stronger neighbors and friendly countries in a potential conflict.

This probably determines the fact that Kuwaiti military expenditure to GDP ratio changed only slightly until the years 2015 and 2016. As this time correlates with the beginning of the coalition military intervention into Yemen, we may conclude that the

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<sup>59</sup> Military Balance (2018), Chapter Seven: Middle East and North Africa, 2018. DOI: 10.1080/04597222.2018.1416983, 327

<sup>60</sup> Ibid, 345

country – even though it did not play any decisive role in the conflict – decided to strengthen its military concerning this task. Change of this ratio could be also partly explained by falling oil prices – especially in the year 2015, when gross Kuwaiti military expenditure slightly fell. But the next year gross military expenditure increased over the 2014 level, so I find the influence of war very probable.

The structure of arms transfer also supports this theory. The thing is, since 2016 Kuwaiti contracts have been aimed generally at renovating and strengthening its aviation. For instance, the country has signed or is going to sign the contracts for 28 Typhoon Block-20 fighter jets (Italy), 30 Super Cougar tactical helicopters (France), 28 F/A-18E Super Hornet fighter jets (US) and other types of aircraft. The arms for these jets include JDAM guided bombs (US), AAQ-33 Sniper targeting pods (US), Brimstone missiles (UK) and other types of arms. For now, the Kuwaiti Air Force consists primarily of F/A-18C/D Hornet jets. Unlike other GCC countries, Kuwait does not purchase a lot of defensive arms, which – again – means that the country counts on the assistance of its allies in protecting its territory.

## **OMAN**

Even though Oman does not have an international image of a militant country – it was the only GCC country which refused to join Saudi coalition in Yemen – its military expenditure to GDP ratio has remained the largest in the world for several years (Saudi Arabia usually occupies second place).<sup>61</sup> In 2016 this number reached a stunning 16.4% of the GDP. One should keep in mind though that the military expenditure/GDP ratio in the case of Oman is much more volatile than gross military expenditure. For instance, this more

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<sup>61</sup> Camilla Hodgson, “The 12 countries that spend the highest proportion of GDP on their military,” Business Insider, July 7, 2017, <http://www.businessinsider.com/12-countries-highest-military-budgets-percentage-of-gdp-2017-7?r=UK&IR=T>.

than 4% ratio increase in the year 2016 correlates with just a minor increase in military expenditure, so the fall of the GDP during the oil crisis played a major role in the volatility. On the other hand, gross military expenditure was rising drastically during 2011 and 2012 and then did not fall significantly despite the oil crisis. Even amid the oil prices fall, Oman decided not to decrease its military expenditure, which means that the country considers its capability of self-protection a primary objective.

For this task Oman keeps an army of 25,000 soldiers. According to the Military Balance report, this army is well equipped and trained. The country also possesses a relatively strong Air Force which has been recently reinforced by modern Typhoon Block-20 (UK) jets, and C-295 transport aircraft (Spain). Still, according to the data, Oman concentrates on purchasing defensive gear as combat ac radar APG-68 (US), anti-tank missile FGM-148 Javelin (US), air-search radar Lanza-LRR (Spain), mobile air-defense system Avenger (US) and others. The large emphasis is made on updating Omani military jets with the most modern gear and importing enough radars and air-defense systems to win air-superiority in case of defensive war.

Unlike Kuwait or Bahrain, Oman is clearly striving to conduct independent policies and self-protection. Such a position allows this country not to follow its stronger allies in their conflicts – like, for instance, the Yemeni Civil War. Also, according to the Military Balance report, the large part of Omani military expenditure goes to the development of infrastructure – for instance, the renovation at the port of Duqum, which is used actively in the interests of the US fleet, the major naval power of the Gulf region.<sup>62</sup> The country's enormous military expenditure, therefore, serves its will of independence and neutral status.

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<sup>62</sup> Military (2018), 354

## **QATAR**

Even though Qatar is one of the two nations which has actively tried to change the GCC power balance and position itself as Saudi Arabia's rival since the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, its military capabilities do not correlate with these ambitions at all. Unlike Yemen, Qatar has apparently not been devoting too much attention to military development. Its military expenditure increased from \$3,45 billion in the year 2011 to \$5,09 billion in 2014 and then slightly decreased under the influence of the oil crisis. When the GDP of the country started to fall, Qatar decided to spend less on its military, and as a result the military expenditure/GDP ratio has always been over 2% but never reached 3%. Again, in the case of Oman we have seen the contrary situation – but Qatar surely has not been betting on its independent military capacity in a potential conflict.

This decision seems pragmatic. The second smallest country of the GCC with the second smallest army of the Council (8,500 soldiers, just 2,500 more than Bahraini army), Qatar's demography and geography would not allow the country to establish an effective army even in the case of exponentially increasing military expenditure. In potential warfare, Qatar would probably count on its allies – and amid the conflict with the GCC, it is actively looking for new ones (the previous chapter has already discussed strengthening ties with Iran and Turkey). Apart from this tactic, Qatar is still keeping its small army modern and capable: the country purchases a considerable number of defensive arms such as MILAN anti-tank missiles (France), Exocet CDS coast defensive systems, Kronos air search radars (Italy), FGM-148 Javelin anti-tank missiles and many others. Unsurprisingly, many of these contracts date from 2016 to 2017, when the relations of Qatar with the rest of the GCC became shaky. Also, when the crisis became inevitable, Qatar decided to boost its Air Force and Navy by buying 36 F-15E Strike Eagle fighter jets (US), 12 Rafale fighter jets (France), different types of trainee aircraft from diversified suppliers as well as four

corvettes, two offshore-patrol vessels and an amphibious platform BDSL (Italy). It has also shown interest in Russian C-400 anti-air missile systems.<sup>63</sup> In general, Qatar is trying to diversify its exports with the main supplies coming from the US, France and other NATO members, but also from Russia, Turkey, Pakistan, China and other non-NATO countries.

The last necessary thing to say about Qatar and its military expenditure and doctrine is that throughout the recent years (as described in the previous chapters), the country spread and strengthened its influence by means of financing different militant groups, indirectly participating in proxy wars and spreading its views by means of Al-Jazeera and other media. It was participating in the military activity indirectly, and for this reason this was not visible in the military expenditure structure. Unfortunately, the expenditure data for 2017 is currently unavailable, so we do not know to what extent the outbreak of crisis influenced Qatar's military budget and doctrine. However, the siege imposed by Saudi Arabia and other countries lays a burden on Qatar's economy and for that reason I consider a rapid increase of military spending rather improbable. Also, keeping in mind that boosting military requires time, it would not be pragmatic to react to potential aggression by signing new contracts. In today's situation, Qatar will most probably seek protection by Turkey, Iran and the US.

## **THE UAE**

Just like Qatar, the UAE try to put themselves as an independent military power, not wanting to blindly follow the political and military lines of Saudi Arabia. But unlike Oman and Qatar, the UAE military plays an important role in reaching this goal. Recently, the UAE army (and first of all, the Air Forces) has conducted a number of military

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<sup>63</sup> Andrey Ostroukh, Aziz El Yaakoubi and Gareth Jones, "Qatar in talks to buy Russia's S-400 systems: Tass," *Reuters*, January 25, 2018, <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-russia-qatar-military-hardware/qatar-in-talks-to-buy-russias-s-400-systems-tass-idUSKBN1FE0HP>.

operations in the Middle Eastern region. Some of them were coordinated with Saudi Arabia, but others probably were not.

One of the most striking examples of the UAE's use of its military power was in Libya, May 2017, when a satellite captured the image of six US-made military jets on the air base of General Haftar's forces. According to the sources, this deployment represents a part of the larger campaign conducted by Russia, Egypt and the UAE. Its main goal is to support General Haftar which is currently opposing the UN-backed government of Libya. It is still unclear if the US or Saudi Arabia were aware of the UAE's active participation in this conflict.<sup>64</sup> In addition to that, the UAE, together with the US, successfully supported pro-Hadi Yemeni troops in fighting Al-Qaeda, including liberating Shawba province from the influence of this radical organization.<sup>65</sup> The UAE has also taken an active part in the Yemeni conflict and the war against ISIS. Apart from air and ground operations, the UAE diversified its approach to the Yemeni conflict by providing training ground for pro-Hadi troops on the Emirati territory near the city of Al-In.<sup>66</sup>

This active, and to a certain extent aggressive, foreign policy correlates with the UAE military doctrine, which includes:

- Mobilizing all its human and natural resources, as well as technology, to compensate for the country's moderate size and small population;
- Building its military and other national security-related infrastructure, including cybersecurity;

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<sup>64</sup> Jared Malsin, "U.S.-Made Airplanes Deployed in Libya's Civil War, in Defiance of U.N.," *Time*, May 9, 2017, <http://time.com/4746914/libya-civil-war-airplanes-haftar-uae>.

<sup>65</sup> Aziz El Yaakoubi, Larry King and James Dalgleish, "U.S.-backed Yemeni troops attack al Qaeda in southern state," *Reuters*, August 3, 2017, <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-yemen-security-usa-emirates/u-s-backed-yemeni-troops-attack-al-qaeda-in-southern-state-idUSKBN1AJ2UW>.

<sup>66</sup> "UAE to train Yemeni resistance men for army," December 20, 2015, *Emirates 24/7*, <https://www.emirates247.com/news/region/uae-to-train-yemeni-resistance-men-for-army-2015-12-20-1.614538>.

- Seeking strategic depth through overseas military installations and the forward deployment of assets and capabilities;
- Emphasizing the centrality of its strategic alliance with Saudi Arabia;
- Maintaining close ties with the United States;
- Engaging with the global economy and many aspects of emerging globalized culture;
- Opposing all forms of radical Islamism;
- Making a determined effort to limit the expansion of Iranian influence in the Arab world;
- Using “soft power,” such as humanitarian or development aid and investments, at times in conjunction with “hard power,” to promote its interests;
- Maintaining and developing its crucial alliance with GCC member states, other Arab countries, and international partners.<sup>67</sup>

Unfortunately, the UAE military expenditure has not been announced since 2015, the year the Yemeni operation started. However, the most probable reason for this is the start of the oil crisis and reluctance to announce a detailed budget in these circumstances. Still, from 2011 to 2014, the UAE increased its military expenditure/GDP ratio by almost one percent (even though the maximum did not exceed 3.6% of the GDP). At the same time, military expenditure absolute value increased significantly: from \$9.32 billion in 2011 to \$14.4 billion in 2014. As long as Saudi Arabia’s expenditure demonstrated growth during this period of time as well, we may suppose that the aftermath of Arab Spring, which played a major role in the development of Yemeni Civil War, made these countries reconsider their military capacities and encouraged strengthening and modernizing them.

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<sup>67</sup> Hussein Ibish, “The UAE’s Evolving National Security Strategy,” The Arab Gulf States Institute in Washington, April 6, 2017. [http://www.agsiw.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/04/UAE-Security\\_ONLINE-2.pdf](http://www.agsiw.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/04/UAE-Security_ONLINE-2.pdf)

The structure of UAE arms imports suggest the purpose of modernizing and strengthening the state's arsenal was more about offensive than defensive operations. The most obvious prove is the purchase of 8600 guided bombs from the US (GBU-39 SDB and JDAM). The bombs started to be delivered as early as 2015, so they were probably deployed to Yemen and used for bombing ISIS as well. Also, the arsenal was reinforced by 24 units of ground-attacking aircraft Archangel-BPA (US), 8 P-1HH Hammerhead drones (Italy, though these drones have apparently still not been delivered), 10 RQ-1 Predator drones (US) and different kinds of armored vehicles and supporting units. Not too many defensive arms types were purchased during this period of time. In 2017, the UAE is continuing to buy arms capable of supporting its military operations: the country signed the contract for delivery of 13640 Paveway guided bombs (US), 160 MIM-104 PATRIOT surface-to-air missiles systems (US) and others.

According to the Military Balance report (2018), today the UAE army is “arguably the best trained and most capable among the GCC states.”<sup>68</sup> The country is actively trying to develop its forces by means of diversified activities, including military cooperation agreements with the US. The last such agreement was signed in May, 2017. Finally, the UAE is developing its own defense-industrial base in order to reduce its dependence on arms imports. For now, it pays attention to such sectors as defense-electronic, guided weapons, munitions and support.<sup>69</sup> According to SIPRI database, some of the arms are purchased from foreign countries but assembled on the Emirati territory.

## **SAUDI ARABIA**

Even though the UAE army may represent the best trained and capable military force of the GCC, Saudi Arabia is definitely the best-equipped and largest one. According

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<sup>68</sup> Military Balance (2018), 367

<sup>69</sup> Military Balance (2018), 367



to the Military Balance reports, its army size is 75,000 soldiers in addition to 100,000 National Guard, 3,000 marines and other units. For years Saudi Arabia has remained one of the two important powers of the Gulf and the main rival of Iran. The continuing confrontation of these two countries determines regional policies to a large extent.

This confrontation is also visible when analyzing Saudi arms transfers structure. Apart from the UAE, Saudi Arabia is the only GCC country which purchases anti-submarine equipment, for instance, FLASH ASW-sonar (France). This must be a measure against the Iranian submarine fleet, for Iran is the only country in the Persian Gulf region with one. In general, Saudi Arabia buys both defensive and offensive arms. However, the second type prevails due to the Yemen operation and overall lack of regional stability during the last few years. The country has purchased thousands of guided bombs (Paveway, JDAM and other) from the US and other countries of the West, multiple aircraft, armored vehicles, tanks etc. The sources of these kinds of weaponry are rather diversified and include Russia, Bulgaria, Canada, Ukraine, China and other countries, but the largest share of arms always comes from the US.

The military expenditure of Saudi Arabia is skyrocketing. It reached its peak in the year 2015 with \$87.19 billion and in the same year military expenditure/GDP ratio was the highest: military expenditure comprised 12.9% of the GDP. Then both figures started to decrease, which must be connected to the oil crisis and deterioration of the GDP, which led to economic problems in the country. Still, in 2017 the expenditure equaled \$76.7 billion which is much more than the annual military budgets of all the other countries combined.

All these figures matter a lot if we are trying to understand military doctrine and development vector of the GCC countries. Still, the plain numbers are not enough to understand the effectiveness of an army, as it can be examined only on the battlefield – and

that is why the next chapter will be very important. It will form the last component allowing us make a final conclusion about the capability of the GCC to provide regional security.

	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
Bahrain	0.94	1.02	1.24	1.33	1.53	1.52	1.48	1.48
Oman	4.29	6.72	9.25	9.62	9.88	9.10	8.69	
UAE	9.32	9.32	13.90	14.40				
Saudi Arabia	54.22	61.35	70.31	82.52	87.19	81.5	76.7	
Kuwait	4.05	4.62	4.34	4.84	4.43	5.74	5.71	
Qatar	3.45	3.73	4.35	5.09	4.75	4.40		
Iran	26.4	25.2	14.8	15.9	14.2	15.9	16	

Table 2.1: Military Expenditure of the GCC, (2011-2018), \$bn. Source: The Military Balance Annual Reports 2011-2018, <https://www.iiss.org/en/publications/military-s-balance>

	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
Bahrain	3.63%	3.84%	4.94%	3.9%	4.95%	4.77%	4.36%	
Oman	5.9%	8.4%	11.73%	11.95%	16.4%	13.72%	12.08%	
UAE	2.72%	2.6%	3.46%	3.6%				
Saudi Arabia	8.12%	7.79%	7.98%	10.38%	12.9%	12.6%	11.2%	
Kuwait	2.5%	2.64%	2.56%	2.7%	3.6%	5.17%	4.83%	
Qatar	2%	2.03%	2.15%	2.42%	2.84%	2.8%		
Iran	5.47%	4.59%	4.12%	3.82%	3.64%	3.86%	3.73%	

Table 2.2: Military Expenditure to GDP Ratio for the GCC countries (2011-2017). Source: The Military Balance Annual Reports 2011-2018, <https://www.iiss.org/en/publications/military-s-balance>

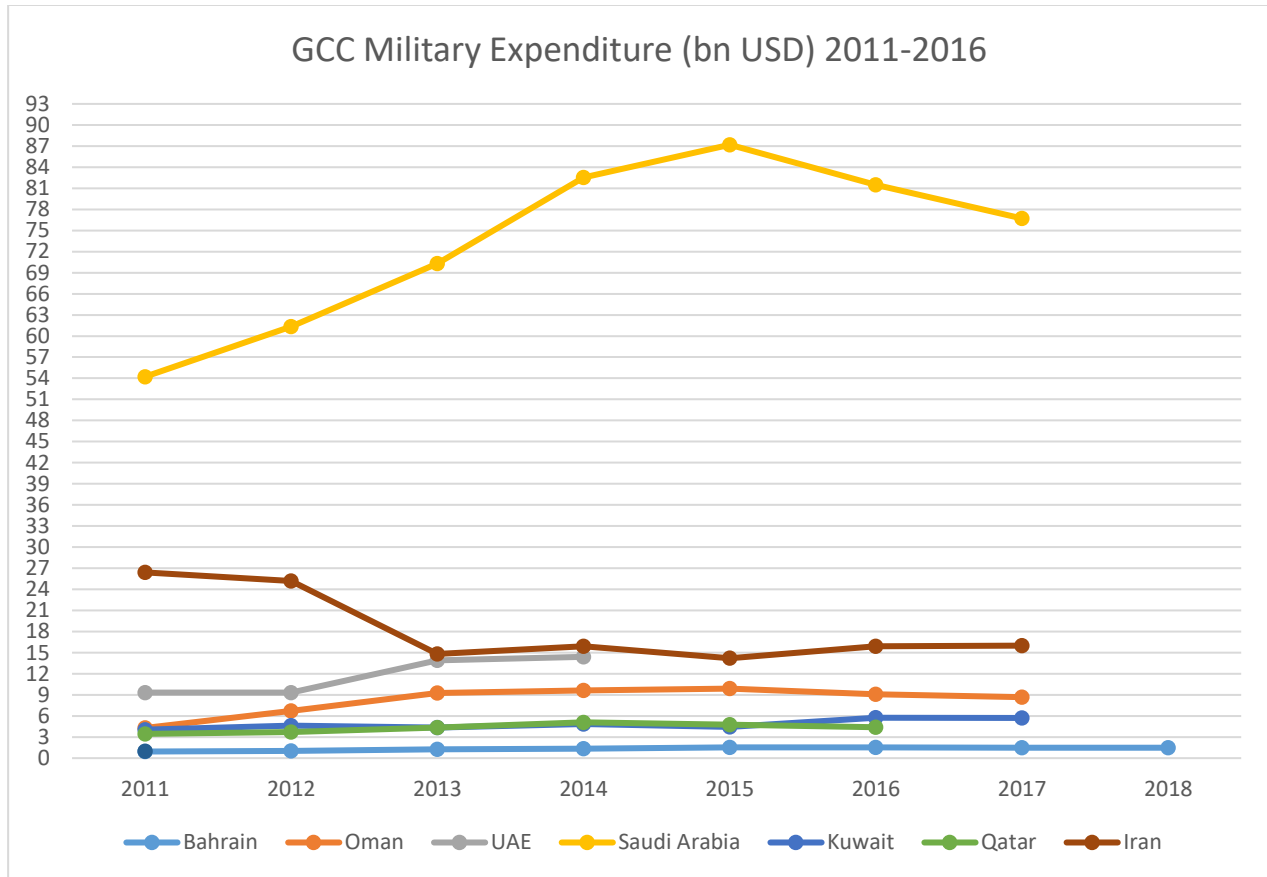


Figure 4.1: Military Expenditure of the GCC, graph (2011-2017). Source: The Military Balance Annual Reports 2011-2018, <https://www.iiss.org/en/publications/military-s-balance>

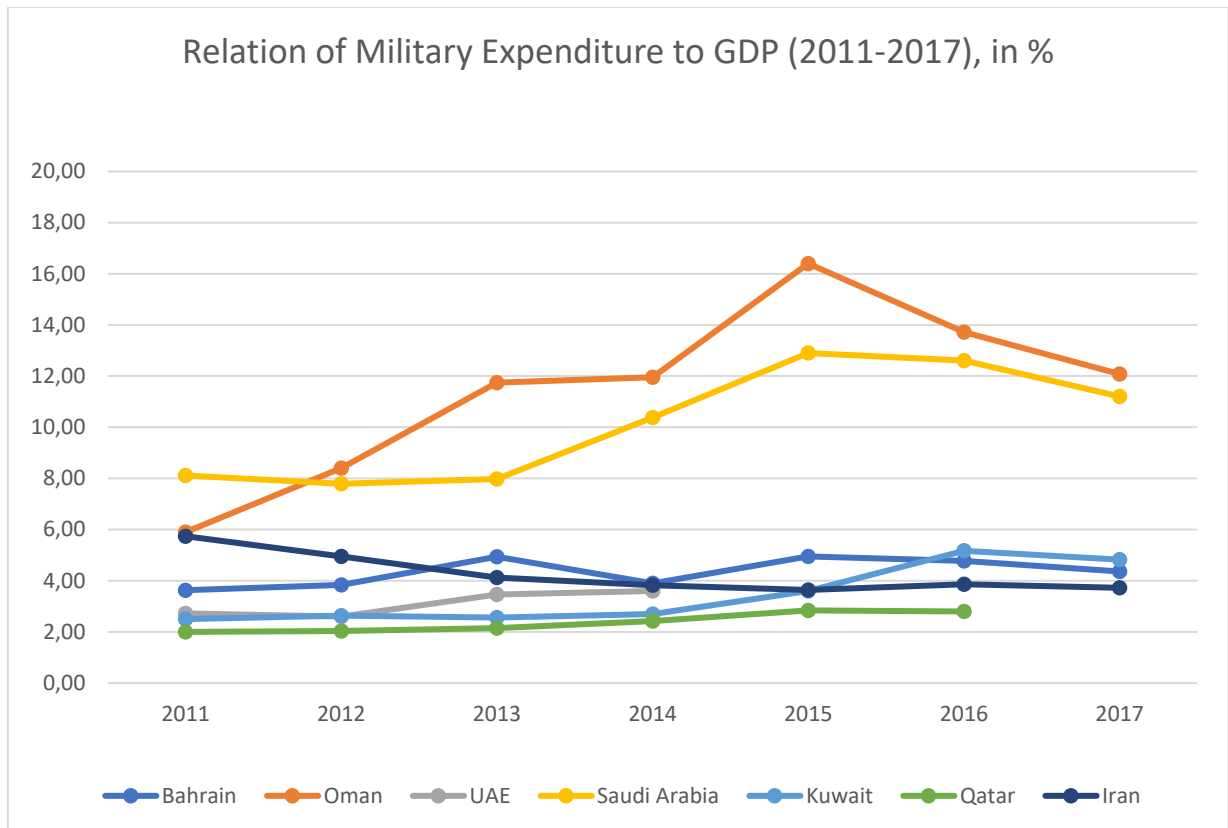


Figure 4.2: Military Expenditure of the GCC (2011-2017), excluding Saudi Arabia.  
Source: The Military Balance Annual Reports 2011-2018,  
<https://www.iiss.org/en/publications/military-s-balance>

### **Chapter 3: Saudi Coalition Intervention into the Civil War of Yemen**

The Civil War of Yemen started in the year 2004 as a smoldering Houthi insurgency, but evolved into full-fledged warfare by 2011. As of today, the decision of a Saudi-led coalition to participate in the war on Sunni president Hadi's side has become the most recent and toughest "exam" of GCC military capabilities.

In the first years of war after the Yemeni Revolution of 2011, Houthi forces were successfully capturing new cities and gaining control over more and more territory. The offence quickly developed eastwards and by the spring of 2015, the Houthis possessed maximum territories since the beginning of the warfare until now. Tactical and morale advantage was on their side, and they had all the capability of moving forward while the disintegrated Yemeni army did not represent an irresistible obstacle. In these circumstances, president Hadi, who by that time had fled from the captured capital, did not have much choice but to ask for foreign intervention. Accordingly, on March 25, 2015, the foreign ambassador of the Yemeni government addressed the Arab League, requesting help in the struggle against Houthi militias that he considered "Iran's puppet."<sup>70</sup> The Arab League decided to discuss the issue, but Hadi's speech probably represented a mere formality. The next day, March 26, the GCC (excluding Oman) began the operation "Decisive Storm," which opened a new page in the Civil War of Yemen.

#### **OPERATION DECISIVE STORM**

As the operation was officially announced, eight countries were directly participating in the coalition. These were:

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<sup>70</sup> Lamiat Sabin, "Arab League: Leaders discuss unified military force while Saudi-led air strikes in Yemen target Houthi militia dubbed 'Iran's puppet'," *Independent*, March 28, 2015. <https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/middle-east/arab-league-leaders-discuss-unified-military-force-while-saudi-led-air-strikes-in-yemen-target-10140918.html> and "Yemen's Hadi seeks UN military support to deter Houthis", March 25, 2015, <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/middleeast/2015/03/yemen-hadi-seeks-military-support-deter-houthis-150324223355704.html>

1. Saudi Arabia – 100 fighter jets; 150,000 soldiers; navy units;
2. UAE – 30 jets, soldiers were later deployed
3. Qatar – 10 jets (allegedly; their actual participation in the operation is unclear);
4. Kuwait – 15 fighter jets;
5. Bahrain – 12 fighter jets;
6. Sudan – 4 jets; also, the country proposed to dispatch 6,000 soldiers but they were apparently not dispatched;
7. Egypt – offered both aircraft and naval vessels, supposedly provided four warships and 800 troops;
8. Jordan – officially supported the coalition, allegedly provided 6 fighter jets later <sup>71</sup>

Apart from these, two countries supported the coalition without direct participation in the conflict:

United States – president Barack Obama authorized logistic and intelligence support for the airstrikes;

Pakistan – by April 2015, the country agreed to back an arms embargo against the Houthis.

Earlier in this thesis it was mentioned that Oman refused to participate in the operation. From the very beginning, the country claimed neutrality in the conflict and did not support intervention. This means that officially the PSF structures could not be mobilized for the sake of this war, for – as already mentioned from the first chapter– its mobilization requires unanimous agreement of the GCC Supreme Council. Some PSF structures and experience could be theoretically used in this warfare, especially when the ground phase of the operation started and Saudi and the UAE troops needed to cooperate on the battlefield. But in general, this example only proved yet again the lack of PSF

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<sup>71</sup> Military Balance (2017) report by IISS (International Institute for Strategic Studies): 2017



flexibility, contradictions between the GCC members and their inability to unite quickly and effectively.

In addition to the absence of unanimous support for intervention among the Supreme Council, we should remember that the PSF doctrine – although being rather unprecise – allows it to be used for protection from inner and outer threats, but not for foreign overseas operations. This might be another obstacle against mobilizing the PSF. At the same time, the goals of the intervention stated by Saudi Arabia as the coalition leader were exclusively defensive:

- Securing stability in Yemen and maintaining “the legitimate, popularly-elected national government of President Abd-Rabbuh Mansour Hadi;”
- Securing Saudi Arabia’s border;
- Stemming Iran’s regional “expansionist” ambitions;
- Combating terrorist threats (Al-Qaeda)
- Safeguarding overall regional security<sup>72</sup>

Of course, these aims only partly correlate with the actual context of the coalition’s (and first and foremost – Saudi) reasons and purposes behind intervention. For now, Saudi Arabia and Iran represent two main military and political powers of the region, and as Houthi militias are Shia, Iran from the very beginning was extremely prone to support their movement. According to evidence, since the initial stages of war, the Islamic Republic supported their allies with arms and other supplies.<sup>73</sup> So, confronting Iranian interests would definitely be the first and most important reason to intervene. In addition, “overall regional security” actually means keeping Saudi influence unquestioned. It seems probable

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<sup>72</sup> “Saudi Arabia and the Yemen Conflict, April 2017 Report,” *Saudi Embassy*, April, 2017. [https://saudiembassy.net/sites/default/files/WhitePaper\\_Yemen\\_April2017\\_0.pdf](https://saudiembassy.net/sites/default/files/WhitePaper_Yemen_April2017_0.pdf)

<sup>73</sup> Jonathan Saul, Parisa Hafezi, Michael Georgy, “Exclusive: Iran steps up support for Houthis in Yemen's war – sources,” *Reuters*, March 21, 2017, <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-yemen-iran-houthis/exclusive-iran-steps-up-support-for-houthis-in-yemens-war-sources-idUSKBN16S22R>.

that this influence and power has become much more solid and unquestionable after the intervention. While the main goal of the intervention continues to be full destruction of Houthi opposition and securing the future of Hadi's regime, its aims could hardly be called solely "defensive."

Just as in the case of Russian intervention in Syria, where the expeditionary operation was prepared long before the actual intervention, it is hard to believe that an operation of such scale would be confirmed and prepared overnight. Most probably, the need of direct military participation became more and more obvious to the GCC as Houthi militias reached new successes on the battlefield and president Hadi's call has just become an official rationale for the operation. The information in the previous chapter that pointed out the early guided bombs and other offensive arms purchases could prove this point.

Decisive Storm followed several main tasks. The most important mission of this first phase of intervention was to destroy the Houthi air force in order to stop the developing offensive and win air supremacy. This task was swiftly and decisively completed within the first days of intervention, as air base Al-Dailami, where around 20 MIG-29's were stored were destroyed by coalition bombings.<sup>74</sup> Later on, anti-air turrets and most of the known ballistic missiles systems were annihilated. After that, Houthi infrastructure – logistics, transports etc. – was considerably damaged, which quickly stopped the militia's offense and made them switch to defensive tactics. However, this destruction of the infrastructure played a major role in the following humanitarian crisis in Yemen.

As a result of this first stage of intervention, the coalition managed to save Hadi's regime, recapture Aden during the battle of Aden, considerably weaken Houthi militias and capture the initiative in the following warfare. The main feature of this stage was

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<sup>74</sup> Hakim Almasmari and Maria Abi-Habib, "Saudi Airstrikes Cripple Air Force in Yemen," *The Wall Street Journal*, Updated March 29, 2015, <https://www.wsj.com/articles/houthi-offensive-continues-in-yemen-1427635677>

extensive use of military jets for bombings and the absence of a massive ground operation (though according to several sources, Saudi Special Forces were deployed during the Battle of Aden, one of the key battles at this stage).<sup>75</sup> On the 21<sup>st</sup> of April, [year], less than a month after the start of intervention, the goals of this first stage of the intervention were completed and operation *Decisive Storm* was announced to be over.

### **OPERATION RESTORING HOPE: AIMS AND RESULTS**

After the success of Decisive Storm, Operation Restoring Hope began. Its main goal was a decisive victory over the Houthi forces and recapturing all Yemeni territory. The operation still has not been completed today. Due to the scattered character of information, a vast amount of speculation and reluctance of the GCC to make the number of losses and other war statistics public, the research of this topic becomes rather difficult. However, as long as the main purpose of this part of the thesis is to estimate the effectiveness of the GCC military intervention, it is sufficient to compare the actual results of the operation to the coalition's plans and aims and analyze the progress and means used.

As far as the final aim of the coalition was full and complete victory, let's take a look at the military maps of the first two years of intervention and try to understand the amount of progress reached (Illustration 1.1). One should keep in mind that *both* maps represent the warfare after Aden operation and first successes of the coalition. This means, that the Coalition Forward Operation Base in Aden has already been established, the city of Ataq taken and the ground operation started.

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<sup>75</sup> Nic Robertson and Hakim Almasmari, "Saudi special forces help oppose Houthi rebels in Yemen, source says," CNN, Update April 3, 2015, <https://www.cnn.com/2015/04/03/middleeast/yemen-saudi-forces/index.html>.

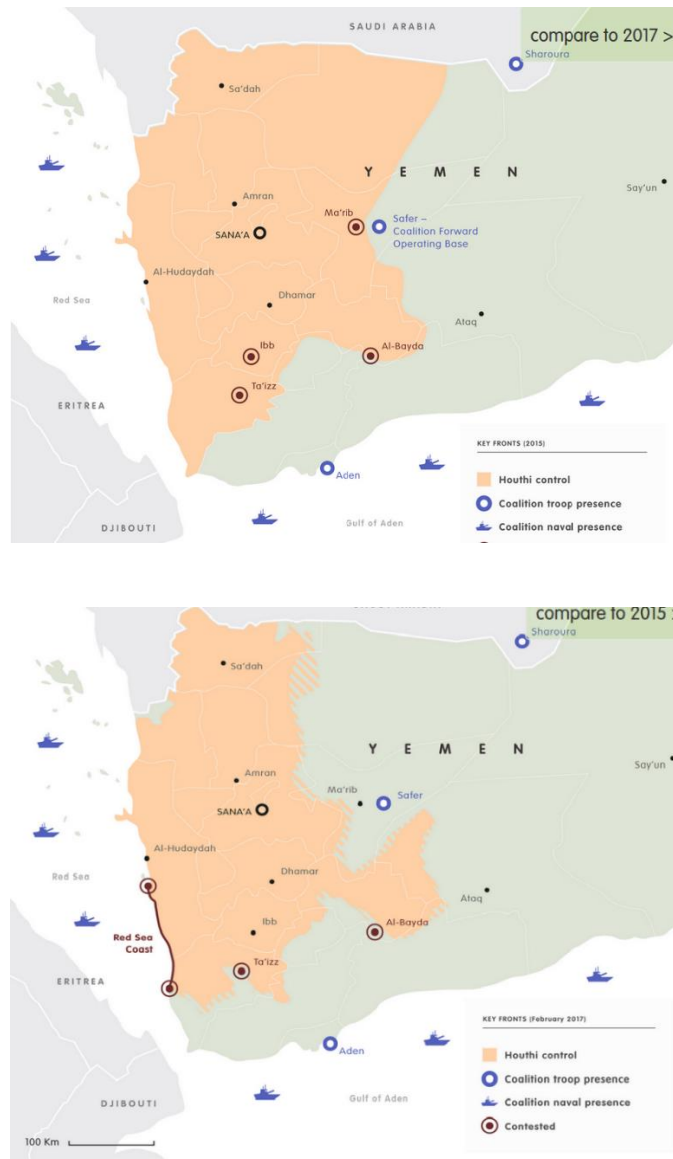


Illustration 1.1: Zones of Military Control, Yemen, 2015 and 2017. Source: <http://www.ecfr.eu/mena/yemen>

The analysis of this stage of the intervention does not speak in favor of the coalition. Of course, if we compare these two maps with Illustration 2.1, which represents the maximum expansion of Houthi control, we will see that the progress is rather significant. You may see a considerable development on the southwestern coast after the Aden operation, as Aden was captured and after that the frontline moved from the shore to the

cities of Ta'izz and Al-Bayda. In addition, on the eastern front, pro-Hadi forces captured the city of Ataq and developed their offense further to the west. However, all these operations were conducted on ground which was captured by Houthis pretty recently and where their influence was not as significant as in the west of the country. Hence when we start to discuss the progress of Operation Restoring Hope, during which the pro-Hadi forces, supported by Saudi and the UAE troops, struggled to recapture the Houthi's "heartland," including the Yemeni capital Sana'a, we may see that the coalition "blitzkrieg" failed. Even though the city of Ma'rib (to the west from the coalition base) was finally captured, the coalition did not manage to move the frontline much further to the west. While in the southwest the frontline near Al-Bayda moved a bit to the northwest, the city was not captured in 2017, and until now the pro-Hadi forces have only managed to secure its eastern part with the struggle continuing inside the city itself.<sup>76</sup> The same insignificant progress may be seen in the south, where the city of Ta'izz was reached but is still not captured. In the spring of 2018, artillery bombings and violent clashes between the two sides are continuing in the city.<sup>77</sup>

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<sup>76</sup> Ali Mahmood, "Yemeni army advances in Al Bayda, Taz and Nehim," *The National*, Updated March 6, 2018, <https://www.thenational.ae/world/mena/yemeni-army-advances-in-al-bayda-taz-and-nehim-1.709883>.

<sup>77</sup> "51 Houthis killed and wounded in the Mukhabarat west of Taiz," *Arab News*, March 21, 2018, <http://www.arabnews.com/node/1270531/middle-east>.

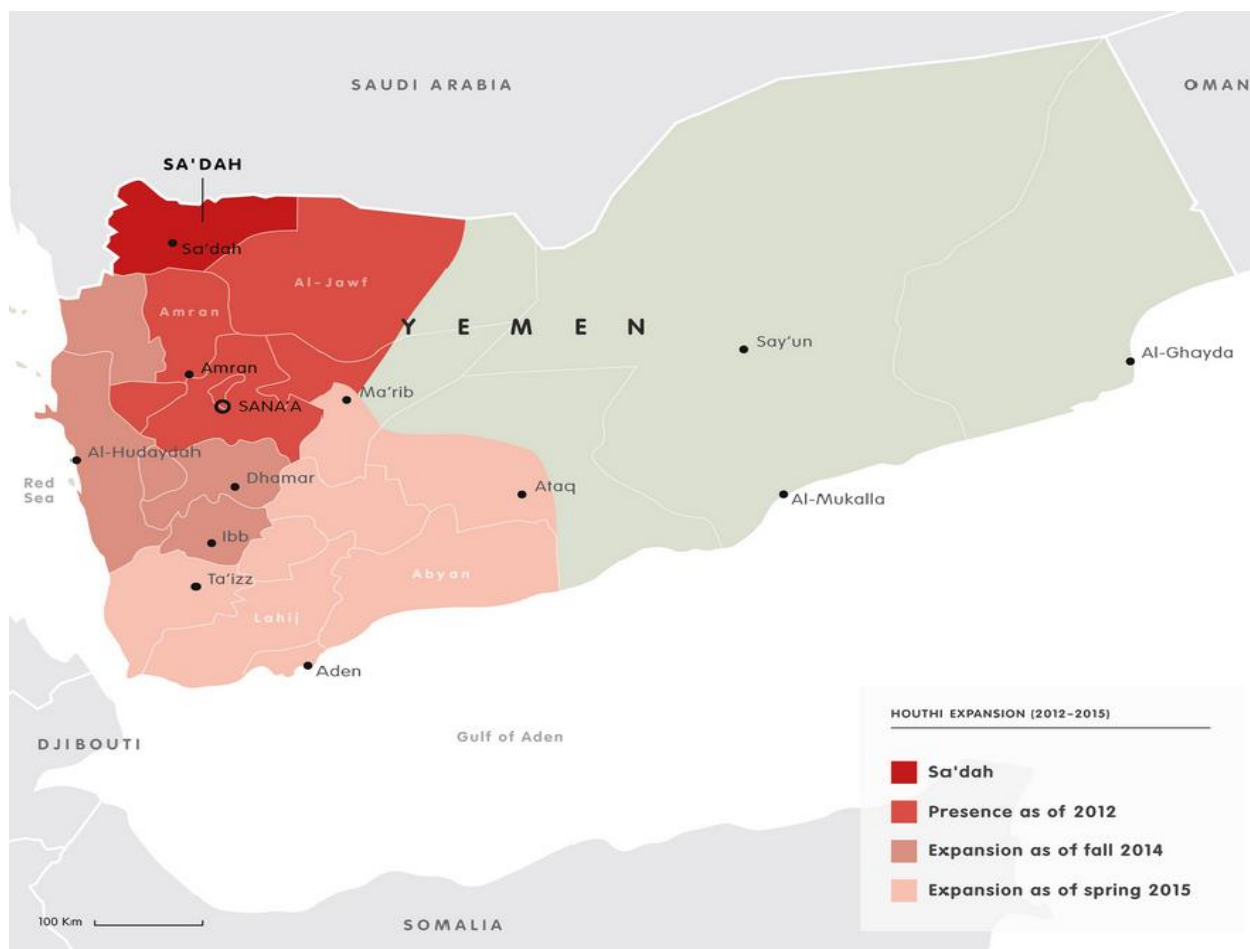


Illustration 2.1: Maximum Houthi Expansion (2012-2015). Source: <http://www.ecfr.eu/mena/yemen>

Over three years the GCC coalition was unable to make considerable progress, and Houthi militias engaged in furious resistance which managed to slow down and, on some fronts – stop its offense. As we know so far, Saudi Arabia deployed at least 150,000 soldiers in Yemen, the UAE sent soldiers too, the coalition deployed up to 180 jets to the country, and Saudi Special Forces took part in this warfare from the very beginning. It is true that some members of the coalition were reluctant to use their forces (like Qatar, for political reasons, and Jordan, for financial ones), but even if we take just the leading members – the

UAE and Saudi Arabia – we get at least 130 military jets (with total absence of any air force on the Houthis' side), more than 150,000 soldiers, Special Forces and Latin American mercenaries which the UAE reportedly used during ground operations.<sup>78</sup> According to several sources, these mercenaries' numbers reached 30,000, and they were trained by the US.<sup>79</sup> At the same time, Houthi militias represent a voluntary and non-professional army. Even though, according to some reports Iran helps Yemen with military advisors and provides some amount of training, it is hard to imagine the effectiveness of these secret activities could compete with the centralized and deeply financed training of the GCC forces.<sup>80</sup>

The same may be said about the arms at the disposal of Houthis. Of course, Iranian help must provide a considerable effect on the development of the conflict. The arms exports from Iran are of great importance to Houthi militias: for instance, between Sept. 2015 through March 2016, allied warships interdicted four Iranian dhows that yielded, in total, more than 80 antitank guided missiles and 5,000 Kalashnikov rifles, as well as sniper rifles, machine guns and almost 300 rocket-propelled grenade launchers, according to data provided by the United States Navy.<sup>81</sup> According to the US admiral Donegan, these transfers are not simply individual deals – Iran sends these types of arms on a regular basis. In addition to that, other sources report that most of the arms probably did not come from Iran, but rather Houthi militias captured them during the 2012-2015 offense. These are

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<sup>78</sup> "UAE deploys mercenaries in Yemen," *The Economist*, November 30<sup>th</sup>, 2015.

<http://country.eiu.com/article.aspx?articleid=733721457&Country=Eritrea&topic=Politics&subtopic=Forecast&subsubtopic=International+relations&u=1&pid=286421012&oid=286421012&uid=1>

<sup>79</sup> Laura Carlsen, „Mercenaries in Yemen—the U.S. Connection,“ *The Huffington Post*, [https://www.huffingtonpost.com/laura-carlsen/mercenaries-in-yementhe-u\\_b\\_8704212.html](https://www.huffingtonpost.com/laura-carlsen/mercenaries-in-yementhe-u_b_8704212.html).

<sup>80</sup> Jonathan Saul, Parisa Hafezi, Michael Georgy, "Exclusive: Iran steps up support for Houthis in Yemen's war – sources," *Reuters*, March 21, 2017, <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-yemen-iran-houthis/exclusive-iran-steps-up-support-for-houthis-in-yemens-war-sources-idUSKBN16S22R>.

<sup>81</sup> Eric Schmitt, "Iran Is Smuggling Increasingly Potent Weapons Into Yemen, U.S. Admiral Says," *New York Times*, September 18, 2017, <https://www.nytimes.com/2017/09/18/world/middleeast/iran-houthis-fifth-fleet-admiral.html>.

high-quality American arms purchased by the former Yemeni government (the one of president Saleh), and they include “more than 100 Humvees with the latest armor packages, 100s of pickup trucks, rocket propelled grenades, advanced radios, night vision goggles and millions of rounds of ammunition.”<sup>82</sup> Still, it is very hard to believe that the countries with some of the world’s highest military spending, and who purchase the most modern arms, could not overwhelm this Houthi arsenal even after a decisive victory in the air and securing of naval supremacy.

### **PRICE OF THE OPERATION**

The last important aspect to analyze in this chapter is the price of the operation, for it is necessary to understand at what cost the coalition participates in this hardly successful warfare. Unfortunately for researchers, most of the GCC sources are reluctant to share information about the operation, especially about such “inconvenient” matters as civilian deaths and military losses. However, using the information provided by journalists and supranational and private research teams, we may build a more or less definite opinion about the price of the operation.

In this context, we cannot exclude the Yemeni humanitarian crisis, which has become one of the most severe situations in today’s world. Since the beginning of the operation (without pre-March 2015 casualties) OHCHR – Office of the High Commissioner, United Nations Human Rights – has recorded a total of 13,504 civilian casualties, including 4,971 killed and 8,533 injured.<sup>83</sup> Many of these people died of hunger and diseases due to the acute humanitarian situation in the country. A large part of this

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<sup>82</sup> Gareth Porter, “Houthi arms bonanza came from Saleh, not Iran,” *Middle East Eye*, April 23, 2015, <http://www.middleeasteye.net/columns/houthi-arms-bonanza-came-saleh-not-iran-1224808066>.

<sup>83</sup> “Yemen: Amid spike in casualties, UN relief official says civilians bearing brunt of ‘absurd war’,” *UN News*, December 28, 2017, <https://news.un.org/en/story/2017/12/640582-yemen-amid-spike-casualties-un-relief-official-says-civilians-bearing-brunt>.



crisis is attributable to the siege imposed on the Houthi territories by the coalition, which blocks most aid and all the commercial transfers from reaching the western part of Yemen by sea or land.<sup>84</sup> As the “blitzkrieg” plan of the operation has failed, the consequences of this decision become more and more severe with the flow of time, as the provinces run out of food and medication . But the humanitarian crisis exists not only in Houthi territories. If you look at the Illustration 3.1, you will see that the food security condition of all the country’s territories is stressed (according to the European Council of Foreign Relations). Moreover, food security of Al-Jawf, Ma’rib and Aden provinces are at crisis level and Shabwa, Abyan and Lahij are at emergency.<sup>85</sup> Most of these provinces are fully or almost fully controlled by pro-Hadi forces, and theoretically it would be the duty of the coalition to prevent humanitarian crisis there. Even though the Saudi government constantly emphasizes its humanitarian help to the people of Yemen, funding 124 projects totaling \$847 million, these numbers do not seem impressive if one examines the tangible results. In addition to these humanitarian issues, Al-Qaeda forces used the vacuum and chaos of the military operation to assert control over several areas of the country. If you look at Illustration 4.1, the purple areas represent areas under Qaeda control. And even though the UAE liberation operation in the port of Al-Mukalla was successful with the support of the US forces, there are still areas and cities where this radical group enjoys significant control.<sup>86</sup>

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<sup>84</sup> “Yemen: Coalition Blockade Imperils Civilians,” *Human Rights Watch*, December 7, 2017, <https://www.hrw.org/news/2017/12/07/yemen-coalition-blockade-imperils-civilians>.

<sup>85</sup> Adam Baron, “Mapping the Yemen Conflict,” *European Council on Foreign Relations*, <http://www.ecfr.eu/mena/yemen>.

<sup>86</sup> “Yemen conflict: Troops retake Mukalla from al-Qaeda,” *BBC News*, April 25, 2016, <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-36128614>.

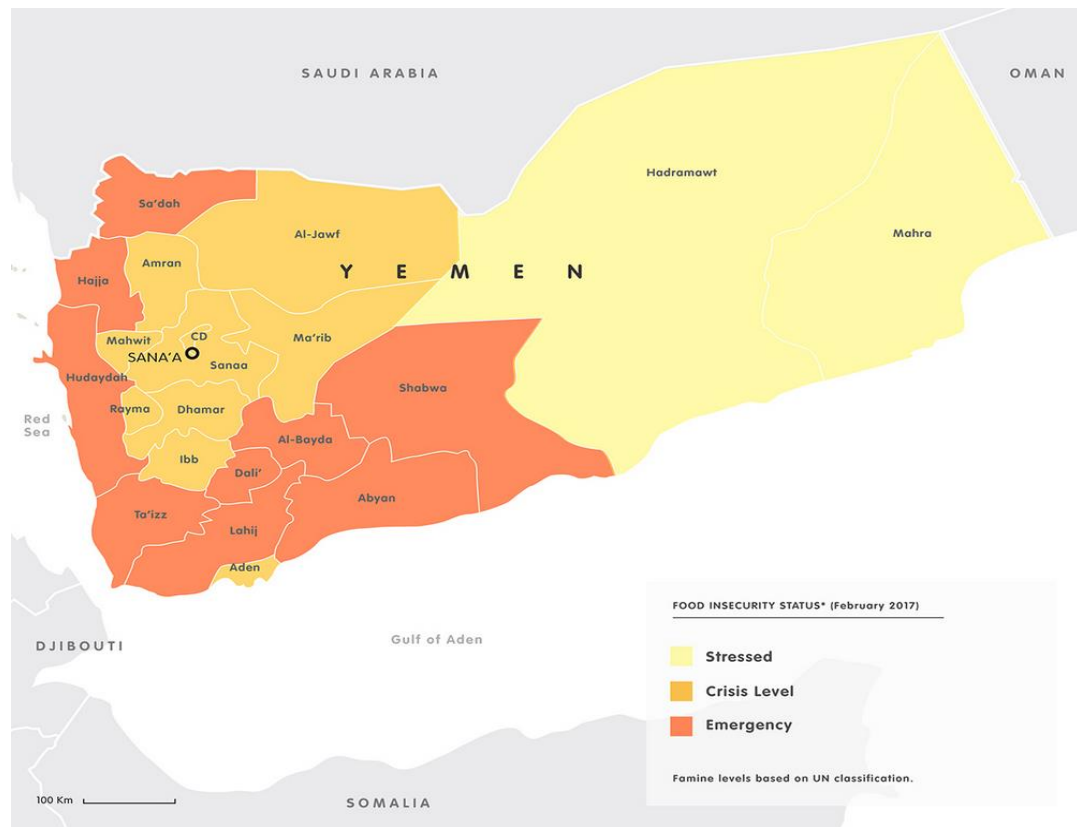


Illustration 3.1: Famine in Yemen, 2017. Source: <http://www.ecfr.eu/mena/yemen>



Arabia.<sup>87</sup> However, we do not know for sure, how many (and if any) of them were brought down in combat, for some of these aircraft could have been lost from Houthi attacks with rockets on airbases. Other results were presented by Houthi general Sharaf Lukman during his interview to the Russian newspaper “AiF”. He said that since the beginning of the war Houthis have destroyed ten Apache helicopters, three F-16 jets and many drones. He also claimed that “dozens of tanks and hundreds of armored vehicles have been eliminated.”<sup>88</sup> The only country openly reporting their casualties is the UAE. From their reports, we know that at the end of Operation Decisive Storm, 3,000 soldiers were dispatched in Yemen, and during the following 15 months 80 of them became casualties of war.<sup>89</sup> Finally, as already mentioned before, the coalition has been actively using mercenary power, and the losses among them remain unknown, which makes any analysis almost impossible and speculative.

Based on this, in general we can see that the GCC coalition overwhelms Yemeni forces in manpower, technology, finances, air supremacy and is much better supplied with food and medication than the Houthi side. Still, the progress in the last three years has been not very significant, while associated damage and civilian casualties levels have grown decisively and led to one of the most serious humanitarian crisis in the world. At the same time, since the very beginning Oman declined to participate in the operation, which disabled the PSF mobilization and later Qatar stopped participation in the conflict due to Qatari crisis. Based on this analysis, we may claim that even though the GCC possesses a

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<sup>87</sup> «Воздушная война в Йемене: ход операции и потери участников,» [Air war in Yemen: logics of the operation and losses of the sides], *Voennoye Obozrenie*, September 2, 2017. <https://topwar.ru/124027-vozdushnaya-voyna-v-yemene-hod-operacii-i-poteri-uchastnikov.html>

<sup>88</sup> «Генерал раскрыл потери арабской коалиции в Йемене» [General Revealed the losses by Arab Coalition in Yemen], *Argumenti I Fakti*, January 19, 2016. [http://www.aif.ru/politics/world/myatezhnyy\\_general\\_raskryl\\_poteri\\_arabskoy\\_koalicii\\_v\\_yemene](http://www.aif.ru/politics/world/myatezhnyy_general_raskryl_poteri_arabskoy_koalicii_v_yemene)

<sup>89</sup> “UAE says the ‘war is over’ for its troops in Yemen,” Deutsche Welle, June 16, 2016, <http://www.dw.com/en/uae-says-the-war-is-over-for-its-troops-in-yemen/a-19336750>.

considerable and extremely expensive military power, the use of it during the war has proved it to be relatively weak and ineffective. Taking into account the ineffectiveness of any GCC army and combining it with the internal contradictions and difference of opinions between the members, we may say that for now regional security provided by the Council has feet of clay.

## Conclusion

Over recent years, both Saudi Arabia and UAE have been on the list of top-15 countries in accordance with military expenditure.<sup>90</sup> These countries are leading the coalition intervening in Yemen since 2015, and as described in the last chapter, this military operation cannot be called successful. We should keep in mind that in this case we are not talking about partisan warfare, which the US experienced in Iraq: the coalition is incapable of effectively breaking Houthi frontline and gaining final victory over their militias. At the same time, the task of maintaining regional security through the GCC armies means facing much more existential threats, first of which is potential conflict with the Iranian military, which is participating in the Yemeni conflict by means of proxy war. As a result, for now we should acknowledge the fact that the main task of the GCC security cooperation has not been reached. Moreover, the contradictions between the members which reached their culmination during the Qatari conflict put to question not only the idea of regional security, but also the concept of the GCC as an entity.

The PSF initiative, which has become an incarnation of keeping security by means of a joint force, does not represent an effective organization for the chain of command proved to be inflexible and ineffective. In addition, there is no pattern for cooperation in supplying these forces and the joint doctrine of the Force is extremely blurred. These factors compromise its ability to react quickly and adequately to potential threats. On the country-level, the armies of Kuwait, Qatar and Bahrain might struggle with maintaining their countries' security due to their size, and Saudi and the UAE armies, though being relatively large and well-equipped, have not shown appropriate effectiveness on the

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<sup>90</sup> Nail McCarthy, "The Top 15 Countries For Military Expenditure In 2016 [Infographic]," *Forbes*, April 24, 2017. <https://www.forbes.com/sites/niallmccarthy/2017/04/24/the-top-15-countries-for-military-expenditure-in-2016-infographic/#4718e8243f32>

battlefield. The task of maintaining regional security by the GCC forces will need considerable development on the level of its members' armies and at the supranational level as well. The next steps to be made could include deepening cooperation and overcoming conflicts of interests, working on joint military doctrine, creating a supranational commanding force for the PSF and delegating a considerable amount of decision-making powers to it, improving the concepts of military training on the national level and conducting more joint trainings within the PSF framework.

## Appendix

Table 3.1: Arms Imports of the GCC (ordered/delivered): 2011-2017. Source: SIPRI Arms Transfers Database.  
<https://www.sipri.org/databases/armstransfer>

Year of Order	Bahrain	Kuwait	Oman	Qatar	Saudi Arabia	UAE
... - 2011	<u>US:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• MGM-140B ATACMS (30)</li> </ul> <u>US (o. 2010):</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• AIM-120C AMRAAM (25)</li> </ul> <u>France (o. 2009):</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Black Scorpion (20)</li> <li>• Turkey (2010-2011)</li> <li>• ARMA (60)</li> <li>• Cobra (170)</li> </ul>	<u>Austria (2010):</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pandur I; Pandur II (80)</li> </ul> <u>Russia: (o.2009)</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• BMP-3 (70)</li> </ul> <u>US (o.2008-2011):</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Desert Chameleon (20, for police)</li> <li>• BGM-71F TOW-2B (1418)</li> <li>• BGM-71 TOW (2127)</li> <li>• Patriot PAC-3 (6)</li> <li>• AIM-120C</li> </ul>	<u>France (2004-2009):</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• NH-90 TTH 20/20</li> <li>• MM-40-3 Exocet (50/50)</li> <li>• MICA (110)</li> <li>• VL-MICA (1)</li> </ul> <u>Germany (2007):</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Diesel engine</li> </ul> <u>Italy (2007-2009):</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Super Rapid 76mm (3/3)</li> <li>• Centauro (3/3)</li> </ul> <u>Netherlands (2007):</u>	<u>France (2009-2010):</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mistral (35/35)</li> <li>• MM-40-3 Exocet (70)</li> </ul> <u>France:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• HIGUARD (22)</li> <li>• Sherpa (10)</li> </ul> <u>Italy (o. 2008):</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• AW139 (16)</li> </ul> <u>US (2008-2010):</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• C-130J-30 Hercules (4)</li> <li>• C-17A Globemaster-3 (2)</li> </ul>	<u>Finland:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• NEMO 120mm</li> </ul> <u>France (2006-2011):</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• AS565M Panther (6)</li> <li>• CAESAR 155mm (132)</li> <li>• Damocles (50/60)</li> <li>• Aravis (73)</li> <li>• BONUS-2 (1000)</li> <li>• Ground Master-60 (20)</li> <li>• Mistral (800)</li> <li>• MPCV (49)</li> </ul>	<u>France (2003-2011):</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Baynunah (6/6)</li> <li>• MM-40-3 Exocet (150/150)</li> <li>• CAPTAS VDS (1)</li> <li>• Ocean Master (2)</li> <li>• UMS-4110 (1)</li> <li>• MICA (20)</li> </ul> <u>China:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pterodactyl-1 (2/2)</li> </ul> <u>Denmark (2004):</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Scanter-2001 (6/6)</li> </ul> <u>Finland (2009):</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• NEMO 120mm (6/6)</li> </ul> <u>Germany (2003-2011):</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• MTU-595 (24/24)</li> </ul>



		<p>AMRAAM (120)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• JDAM (51)</li> <li>• KC-130J Hercules (3)</li> <li>• Pegasus (10)</li> <li>• LAV-25 turret (40)</li> <li>• C-17A Globemaster-3 (1)</li> <li>• MIM-104C PAC-2 (209)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• SMART (3/3)</li> <li>• STING (4/4)</li> </ul> <p><u>US (2009-2011):</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• C-130J-30 Hercules (1/1)</li> <li>• C-130J Hercules (2/2)</li> <li>• F-16C Block-50/52 (12/12)</li> </ul>		<p><u>Germany (2006-2011):</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• OM-366 (132/132)</li> <li>• IRIS-T (1400)</li> <li>• Luna (10)</li> <li>• OM-924 (73)</li> </ul> <p><u>Italy:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Falco (4)</li> <li>• X-TAR (26)</li> </ul> <p><u>Netherlands (2009):</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• SQUIRE (225)</li> </ul> <p><u>Spain (2008-2009):</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A-330 MRTT (6)</li> </ul> <p><u>Switzerland (2006):</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Skyguard (18)</li> </ul> <p><u>US (2006-2011):</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• AH-64D Apache (12/12)</li> <li>• CF-6/F-103 (6/6)</li> <li>• JDAM (900/900)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• MTU-2000 (24)</li> <li>• MTU-4000 (4/4)</li> <li>• Rmah (2/2)</li> </ul> <p>Italy (2003-2010):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Super Rapid 76mm (6/6)</li> <li>• Orion RTN-25X (6/6)</li> <li>• Abu Dhabi (1/1)</li> <li>• Marte-2 (100)</li> <li>• Falaj-2 (2/2)</li> </ul> <p><u>Russia (2000):</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 96K9 Pantsyr-S1 (50/50)</li> <li>• 9M311/SA-19 (1000/1000)</li> </ul> <p><u>Spain (2008):</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A-330 MRTT (3/3)</li> </ul> <p><u>Switzerland (2009):</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• PC-21 (25/25)</li> </ul> <p><u>US (2008-2011)</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• RIM-162 ESSM (237/237)</li> <li>• RIM-116A RAM (200/200)</li> <li>• GMLRS (1560/1560)</li> <li>• JDAM (300/300)</li> </ul>
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					<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• M-1A2S (59/59)</li> <li>• S-70/UH-60L (22/22)</li> <li>• 6V-53 (724/724)</li> <li>• AH-64E Apache Guardian (12/12)</li> <li>• CF-6/F-103 (6/6)</li> <li>• ETS (72/72)</li> <li>• King Air-350 ISR (2/2)</li> <li>• LAV-25 turret (264/264)</li> <li>• M-198 155mm (90/90)</li> <li>• M-1A2S (314/314)</li> <li>• Paveway (100/100)</li> <li>• 6V-53 (312/312)</li> <li>• AAQ-333 Sniper (21/21)</li> <li>• BGM-71 TOW (2742/2742)</li> <li>• S-70/UH-60L (16/16)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• M-142 HIMARS (20/20)</li> <li>• MIM-104C PAC-2 (216/216)</li> <li>• MIM-104F PAC-3 (292/292)</li> <li>• Patriot PAC-3 (9/9)</li> <li>• Paveway (938/938)</li> <li>• AGM-114L HELLFIRE (390/390)</li> <li>• AIM-120C AMRAAM (224/224)</li> <li>• C-17A Globemaster-3 (6/6)</li> <li>• S-70/UH-60L (14/14)</li> <li>• AGM-65 Maverick (500/500)</li> <li>• AT-802U (24/24)</li> <li>• CBU-97 SFW (250/250)</li> <li>• F-16E (1/1)</li> <li>• S-70/UH-60L (26/26)</li> <li>• CH-47F Chinook (12/12)</li> <li>• DB-110 (6/6)</li> <li>• M-ATV (50/50)</li> </ul>
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					<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 6V-53 (825/825)</li> <li>• AAQ-13 LANTIRN (52/193)</li> <li>• AGM-114L HELLFIRE (2592/2592)</li> <li>• AGM-88 HARM (?/600)</li> <li>• AH-64E Apache Guardian (24/24)</li> <li>• Several other aircraft types and guided bombs ordered in 2011.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• MGM-140B ATACMS (100/100)</li> <li>• THAAD (2/2)</li> </ul>
2012			<u>Italy:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Super rapid 76mm (4/4)</li> </ul> <u>Netherlands:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• STIR (4/4)</li> <li>• Variant (4/4)</li> <li>• C-295 (4/4)</li> <li>• C-295MPA (4/4)</li> </ul> <u>Spain:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• C-295 (4/4)</li> <li>• C-295MPA (4/4)</li> </ul>	<u>France:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• MILAN (500)</li> </ul>	<u>France:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Aravis (191)</li> </ul> <u>Germany:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• OM-924 (191)</li> </ul> <u>Switzerland:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• PC-21 (55)</li> </ul> <u>US:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• AAQ-33 Sniper (52/158)</li> <li>• AH-64E Apache Guardian (12/12)</li> <li>• DB-110 (10/10)</li> </ul>	<u>Italy:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• P-180MPA (0/2)</li> </ul> <u>US:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• M-ATV (750/750)</li> <li>• RDR-1700 (?/2_)</li> <li>• THAAD missile (96/96)</li> </ul>

			<u>US:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• AAQ-33 Sniper (12/12)</li> <li>• APG-68 (3/3)</li> <li>• DB-110 (4/4)</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• F110 (10/25)</li> <li>• JDAM (600/600)</li> <li>• K-6 120mm (63/63)</li> <li>• King Air (10/10)</li> <li>• King Air-350 ISR (4/4)</li> <li>• MD-500E (12/12)</li> <li>• RGM-84L Harpoon-2 (120/400)</li> <li>• S-70/UH-60L (24/24)</li> </ul>	
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2013		<u>Italy (ordered 2007):</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Aspide (250)</li> </ul> <u>US:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>AGM-114L HELLFIRE (300)</li> <li>AIM-9X Sidewinder (80)</li> <li>C-17A Globemaster-3 (1)</li> <li>MIM-104F PAC-3 (60)</li> </ul>	<u>US:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>AIM-120C AMRAAM (182/317)</li> <li>AIM-9X Sidewinder (50/50)</li> <li>Avenger (18/18)</li> <li>FGM-148 Javelin (100/100)</li> <li>FIM-92 Stinger (0/266)</li> <li>MPQ-64 Sentiel (1)</li> </ul>	<u>Germany:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Leopard-2A6 (44/62)</li> <li>PzH-2000 155mm (24/24)</li> <li>Wisent-2 (3/6)</li> </ul> <u>Switzerland:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>PC-21 (24)</li> </ul>	<u>France:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>MILAN (100)</li> <li>Mistral (65/130)</li> </ul> <u>Italy:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>RAT-31S (2)</li> </ul> <u>US:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>AGM-84H SLAM-ER (110/650)</li> <li>AIM-120C AMRAAM (355/500)</li> <li>CBU-97 SFW (1300/1300)</li> <li>GBU-39 SDB (200/1000)</li> <li>KC-130J Hercules (2/2)</li> <li>M-ATV (534/534)</li> <li>SR-22 (25/25)</li> </ul>	<u>Netherlands:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>FOPV-850 (0/2)</li> </ul> <u>France:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ground Master-200 (12/17)</li> </ul> <u>Germany:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>DM2A4Seehecht (10)</li> </ul> <u>US:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Bell-407 (30/30)</li> <li>RIM-116A RAM (25/25)</li> <li>Talon (1500/2000)</li> </ul>
2014	<u>Russia:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>9M133 Kornet/AT-14 (0/250)</li> </ul>	<u>Russia:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>BMP-3 (33)</li> </ul> <u>Switzerland:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Skygard (2)</li> </ul> <u>US:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>AIM-9X Sidewinder (1)</li> <li>Patriot PAC-3 (1/2)</li> </ul>	<u>Spain:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Lanza-LRR (1/2)</li> <li>Lanza-LTR (1/2)</li> </ul> <u>US:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>BGM-71F TOW-2B (100)</li> </ul>	<u>Germany:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Dingo-2 (0/13)</li> <li>Fennek MPC (0/30) – uncertain</li> <li>Q-01 (0/17)</li> </ul> <u>Spain:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A-33- MRTT (0/2)</li> </ul> <u>US:</u>	<u>Austria:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>MMV (50)</li> </ul> <u>China:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ch-4 (2)</li> <li>Pterodactyl-1 (2)</li> </ul> <u>France:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>COBRA (0/2)</li> </ul> <u>Germany:</u>	<u>Germany:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Wisent-2 (2/4)</li> </ul> <u>US:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Archangel-BPA (24/24)</li> <li>Caiman (500/500)</li> <li>GBU-39 SDB (2500/5000)</li> <li>JDAM (3600/3600)</li> </ul>

				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• AGM-114K HELLFIRE (0/576)</li> <li>• AH-64D Apache (0/24)</li> <li>• Boeing-737 AEW&amp;C (0/3)</li> <li>• FGM-148 Javelin (250/500)</li> <li>• MIM-104C PAC-2 (150/248)</li> <li>• MIM-104F PAC-3 (100/778)</li> <li>• Patriot PAC-3 (3/10)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• FPB-40 (1/33)</li> </ul> <u>US:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• AGM-114 HELLFIRE (2176/2176)</li> <li>• AGM-154 JSOW (220/355)</li> <li>• AH-6S (24/24)</li> <li>• BGM-71F TOW-2B (4941/4941)</li> <li>• BGM-71 TOW (10747)</li> <li>• VT-400 (60/60)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• M-ATV (44/44)</li> <li>• MaxxPro (544/2482)</li> <li>• RQ-1 Predator (10/10)</li> </ul>
2015	<u>US:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• GMLRS (24)</li> </ul> <u>China:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• SR-5 (4)</li> </ul>	<u>France:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sherpa (40/120)</li> </ul> <u>Germany:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tpz-1 Fuchs (0/12)</li> </ul>		<u>France:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• AASM (0/300)</li> <li>• AM-39 Exocet (0/60)</li> <li>• Meteor (0/160)</li> <li>• MICA (0/300)</li> <li>• Rafale (0/24)</li> <li>• Storm Shadow/SCALP (0/140)</li> </ul> <u>Italy:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Kronos (?)</li> </ul> <u>US:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• C-17A Globemaster-3 (4/4)</li> </ul>	<u>France:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• FLASH (0/10)</li> </ul> <u>Germany:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• IPV-60 (0/2)</li> </ul> <u>US:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• C-130J-30 Hercules (2/2)</li> <li>• M-ATV (1325/1325)</li> <li>• MH-60R Seahawk (?/10)</li> <li>• MIM-104F PAC-3 (80/320)</li> <li>• Paveway (8120/8120)</li> </ul>	<u>France:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Helios-2 (0/2)</li> </ul> <u>Germany:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• BR-710 (0/4)</li> </ul> <u>Italy:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• AW139 (9)</li> </ul> <u>US:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• C-17A Globemaster-3 (2/2)</li> <li>• GMLRS (390/390)</li> <li>• ISB4 (50/50)</li> <li>• M-142 HIMARS (12/12)</li> <li>• MGM-140B ATACMS (93/124)</li> </ul>

				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• FIM-92 Stinger (0/295)</li> </ul>		
2016	<u>US:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• BGM-71 TOW (0/264)</li> </ul>	<u>France:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Super Cougar (0/30)</li> <li>• Sherpa (0/300)</li> </ul> <u>Italy:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Typhoon Block-20 (0/28)</li> </ul> <u>US:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• AAQ-33 Sniper (0/18)</li> <li>• F/A-18E Super Hornet (0/28 – not ordered!)</li> </ul>		<u>Netherlands:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Stan Patrol-5009 (0/6, not ordered)</li> </ul> <u>France:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Exocet CDS (?)</li> <li>• MICA (?)</li> <li>• MM-40-3 Exocet (?)</li> <li>• Searchmaster (0/17)</li> <li>• VL-MICA (0/4)</li> </ul> <u>Italy:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• BDSL (0/1)</li> <li>• Fincantieri-3000 (0/4)</li> <li>• Fincantieri-7—(2)</li> <li>• Marte-ER (?)</li> </ul> <u>US:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• F-15E Strike Eagle (0/36)</li> <li>• FPS-132 UEWR (0/1)</li> </ul>	<u>France:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sherpa (0/100)</li> <li>• VAB-VCI (0/100)</li> </ul> <u>Germany:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• EC145 (0/23)</li> </ul> <u>Italy:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• RAT-31S (0/6)</li> </ul> <u>US:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• JDAM (5200/5200)</li> <li>• King Air-350 ISR (?/2)</li> <li>• M-1A2S (?/153)</li> <li>• M-88A2 HERCULES (?/20)</li> <li>• S-70/UH-60L (?/8)</li> </ul>	<u>Austria:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Campcopter S-100</li> </ul> <u>Finland:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• AMV (40/40)</li> </ul> <u>Italy:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• P-1HH Hammerhead (0/8)</li> </ul> <u>US:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• JDAM (?/4000)</li> </ul>

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